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THE SCARLET CAR

Miss Forbes.

THE NOVELS AND STORIES OF
RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

THE SCARLET CAR

BY

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

FINLEY PETER DUNNE

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TO

NED STONE

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

In the articles about Mr. Davis that have appeared since his death, the personality of the man seems to overshadow the merit of the author. In dealing with the individual, the writers overlook the fact that we have lost one of the best of our story-tellers. This is but natural. He was a very vivid kind of person. He had thousands of friends in all parts of the world, and a properly proportionate number of enemies, and those who knew him were less interested in the books than in the man himself —the generous, romantic, sensitive individual whose character and characteristics made him a conspicuous figure everywhere he went—and he went everywhere. His books were sold in great numbers, but it might be said in terms of the trade that his personality had a larger circulation than his literature. He probably knew more waiters, generals, actors, and princes than any man who ever lived, and the people he knew best are not the people who read books. They write them or are a part of them. Besides, if you knew Richard Davis you knew his books. He translated himself literally, and no expurgation was needed to make the translation suit-

able for the most innocent eyes. He was the identical chivalrous young American or Englishman who strides through his pages in battalions to romantic death or romantic marriage. Every one speaks of the extraordinary youthfulness of his mind, which was still fresh at an age when most men find avarice or golf a substitute for former pastimes. He not only refused to grow old himself, he refused to write about old age. There are a few elderly people in his books, but they are vague and shadowy. They serve to emphasize the brightness of youth, and are quickly blown away when the time for action arrives. But if he numbered his friends and acquaintances by the thousands there are other thousands in this country who have read his books, and they know, even better than those who were acquainted with him personally, how good a friend they have lost. I happened to read again the other day the little collection of stories, his first, I think, which commences with "Gallegher," and includes "The Other Woman," and one or more of the Van Bibber tales. His first stories were not his best. He increased in skill and was stronger at the finish than at the start. But "Gallegher" is a fine story, and is written in that eager, breathless manner which was all his own, and which always reminds me of a boy who has hurried home to tell of some wonderful thing he has seen. Of course it is improbable. Most good stories are and practically all readable books of history.

No old newspaper man can believe that there ever existed such a "copy boy" as Gallegher, or that a murderer with a finger missing from one hand could escape detection even in a remote country village. Greed would have urged the constable to haul to the calaboose every stranger who wore gloves. But he managed to attach so many accurate details of description to the romance that it leaves as definite an impression of realism as any of Mr. Howells's purposely realistic stories. The scene in the newspaper office, the picture of the prize-fight, the mixture of toughs and swells, the spectators in their short gray overcoats with pearl buttons (like most good story-tellers he was strong on the tailoring touch), the talk of cabmen and policemen, the swiftness of the way the story is told, as if he were in a hurry to let his reader know something he had actually seen—create such an impression of truth that when the reader finishes he finds himself picturing Gallegher on the witness-stand at the murder trial receiving the thanks of the judge. And he wonders what became of this precocious infant, and whether he was rewarded in time by receiving the hand of the sister of the sporting editor in marriage.

To give the appearance of truth to the truth is the despair of writers, but Mr. Davis had the faculty of giving the appearance of the truth to situations that in human experience could hardly exist. The same quality that showed in his tales made him the

most readable of war correspondents. He went to all the wars of his youth and middle age filled with visions of glorious action. Where other correspondents saw and reported evil-smelling camps, ghastly wounds, unthinkable suffering, blunders, good luck and bad luck, or treated the subject with a mathematical precision that would have given Clausewitz a headache, Davis saw and reported it first of all as a romance, and then filled in the story with human details so that the reader came away with an impression that all these heroic deeds were performed by people just like the reader himself, which was exactly the truth.

It is a pity that the brutality of the German staff officers and the stupidity of the French and English prevented him from seeing the actual fighting in Flanders and Picardy. The scene is an ugly one, a wallow of blood and mire. But so probably were Agincourt and Crécy when you come to think of it, and Davis, you may be sure, would have illuminated the foul battle-field with a reflection of the glory which must exist in the breasts of the soldiers.

The fact is, he was the owner of a most enviable pair of eyes which reported to him only what was pleasant and encouraging. A man is blessed or cursed by what his eyes see. To some people the world of men is a confused and undecipherable puzzle. To Mr. Davis it was a simple and pleasant

pattern—good and bad, honest and dishonest, kind and cruel, with the good, the honest, and the kind rewarded; the bad, the dishonest, and the cruel punished; where the heroes are modest, the brave generous, the women lovely, the bus-drivers humorous; where the Prodigal returns to dine in a borrowed dinner jacket at Delmonico's with his father, and where always the Young Man marries the Girl. And this is the world as much as Balzac's is the world, if it is the world as you see it.

FINLEY PETER DUNNE.

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THE SCARLET CAR

TO

NED STONE

THE SCARLET CAR

I

THE JAIL-BREAKERS

For a long time it had been arranged they all should go to the Harvard and Yale game in Winthrop's car. It was perfectly well understood. Even Peabody, who pictured himself and Miss Forbes in the back of the car, with her brother and Winthrop in front, condescended to approve. It was necessary to invite Peabody because it was his great good fortune to be engaged to Miss Forbes. Her brother Sam had been invited, not only because he could act as chaperon for his sister, but because since they were at St. Paul's, Winthrop and he, either as participants or spectators, had never missed going together to the Yale-Harvard game. And Beatrice Forbes herself had been invited because she was herself.

When at nine o'clock on the morning of the game, Winthrop stopped the car in front of her door, he was in love with all the world. In the November air there was a sting like frost-bitten

cider, in the sky there was a brilliant, beautiful sun, in the wind was the tingling touch of three ice-chilled rivers. And in the big house facing Central Park, outside of which his prancing steed of brass and scarlet chugged and protested and trembled with impatience, was the most wonderful girl in all the world. It was true she was engaged to be married, and not to him. But she was not yet married. And to-day it would be his privilege to carry her through the State of New York and the State of Connecticut, and he would snatch glimpses of her profile rising from the rough fur collar, of her wind-blown hair, of the long, lovely lashes under the gray veil.

"'Shall be together, breathe and ride. So, one day more am I deified,'" whispered the young man in the Scarlet Car; "'who knows but the world may end to-night?'"

As he waited at the curb, other great touring-cars, of every speed and shape, in the mad race for the Boston Post Road, and the town of New Haven, swept up Fifth Avenue. Some rolled and puffed like tugboats in a heavy seaway, others glided by noiseless and proud as private yachts. But each flew the colors of blue or crimson.

Winthrop's car, because her brother had gone to one college, and he had played right end for

the other, was draped impartially. And so every other car mocked or cheered it, and in one a bareheaded youth stood up, and shouted to his fellows: "Look! there's Billy Winthrop! Three times three for old Billy Winthrop!" And they lashed the air with flags, and sent his name echoing over Central Park.

Winthrop grinned in embarrassment, and waved his hand. A bicycle cop, and Fred, the chauffeur, were equally impressed.

"Was they the Harvoids, sir?" asked Fred.

"They was," said Winthrop.

Her brother Sam came down the steps carrying sweaters and steamer-rugs. But he wore no holiday countenance.

"What do you think?" he demanded indignantly. "Ernest Peabody's inside making trouble. His sister has a Pullman on one of the special trains, and he wants Beatrice to go with her."

In spite of his furs, the young man in the car turned quite cold. "Not with us?" he gasped.

Miss Forbes appeared at the house door, followed by Ernest Peabody. He wore an expression of disturbed dignity; she one of distressed amusement. That she also wore her automobile coat caused the heart of Winthrop to leap hopefully.

"Winthrop," said Peabody, "I am in rather

an embarrassing position. My sister, Mrs. Taylor Holbrooke"—he spoke the name as though he were announcing it at the door of a drawing-room—"desires Miss Forbes to go with her. She feels accidents are apt to occur with motor-cars—and there are no other ladies in your party—and the crowds——"

Winthrop carefully avoided looking at Miss Forbes.

"I should be very sorry," he murmured.

"Ernest!" said Miss Forbes, "I explained it was impossible for me to go with your sister. We would be extremely rude to Mr. Winthrop. How do you wish us to sit?" she asked.

She mounted to the rear seat, and made room opposite her for Peabody.

"Do I understand, Beatrice," began Peabody, in a tone that instantly made every one extremely uncomfortable, "that I am to tell my sister you are not coming?"

"Ernest!" begged Miss Forbes.

Winthrop bent hastily over the oil valves. He read the speedometer, which was, as usual, out of order, with fascinated interest.

"Ernest," pleaded Miss Forbes, "Mr. Winthrop and Sam planned this trip for us a long time ago—to give us a little pleasure——"

"Then," said Peabody in a hollow voice, "you have decided?"

"Ernest," cried Miss Forbes, "don't look at me as though you meant to hurl the curse of Rome. I have. Jump in. Please!"

"I will bid you good-by," said Peabody; "I have only just time to catch our train."

Miss Forbes rose and moved to the door of the car.

"I had better not go with any one," she said in a low voice.

"You will go with me," commanded her brother. "Come on, Ernest."

"Thank you, no," replied Peabody. "I have promised my sister."

"All right, then," exclaimed Sam briskly, "see you at the game. Section H. Don't forget. Let her out, Billy."

With a troubled countenance Winthrop bent forward and clasped the clutch.

"Better come, Peabody," he said.

"I thank you, no," repeated Peabody. "I must go with my sister."

As the car glided forward Brother Sam sighed heavily.

"My! but he's got a mean disposition," he said. "He has quite spoiled *my* day."

He chuckled wickedly, but Winthrop pretended not to hear, and his sister maintained an expression of utter dejection.

But to maintain an expression of utter dejec-

tion is very difficult when the sun is shining, when you are flying at the rate of forty miles an hour, and when in the cars you pass foolish youths wave Yale flags at you, and take advantage of the day to cry: "Three cheers for the girl in the blue hat!"

And to entirely remove the last trace of the gloom that Peabody had forced upon them, it was necessary only for a tire to burst. Of course, for this effort, the tire chose the coldest and most fiercely wind-swept portion of the Pelham Road, where from the broad waters of the Sound pneumonia and the grip raced rampant, and where to the touch a steel wrench was not to be distinguished from a piece of ice. But before the wheels had ceased to complain, Winthrop and Fred were out of their fur coats, down on their knees, and jacking up the axle.

"On an expedition of this sort," said Brother Sam, "whatever happens, take it as a joke. Fortunately," he explained, "I don't understand fixing inner tubes, so I will get out and smoke. I have noticed that when a car breaks down there is always one man who paces up and down the road and smokes. His hope is to fool passing cars into thinking that the people in his car stopped to admire the view."

Recognizing the annual foot-ball match as intended solely to replenish the town coffers, the

thrifty townsfolk of Rye, with bicycles and red flags, were, as usual, and regardless of the speed at which it moved, levying tribute on every second car that entered their hospitable boundaries. But before the Scarlet Car reached Rye, small boys of the town, possessed of a sporting spirit, or of an inherited instinct for graft, were waiting to give a noisy notice of the ambush. And so, forewarned, the Scarlet Car crawled up the main street of Rye as demurely as a baby-carriage, and then, having safely reached a point directly in front of the police station, with a loud and ostentatious report, blew up another tire.

"Well," said Sam crossly, "they can't arrest *us* for speeding."

"Whatever happens," said his sister, "take it as a joke."

Two miles outside of Stamford, Brother Sam burst into open mutiny.

"Every car in the United States has passed us," he declared. "We won't get there, at this rate, till the end of the first half. Hit her up, can't you, Billy?"

"She seems to have an illness," said Winthrop unhappily. "I think I'd save time if I stopped now and fixed her."

Shamefacedly Fred and he hid themselves under the body of the car, and a sound of hammering and stentorian breathing followed. Of

them all that was visible was four feet beating a tattoo on the road. Miss Forbes got out Winthrop's camera, and took a snapshot of the scene.

"I will call it," she said, "The Idle Rich."

Brother Sam gazed morosely in the direction of New Haven. They had halted within fifty yards of the railroad tracks, and as each special train, loaded with happy enthusiasts, raced past them he groaned.

"The only one of us that showed any common-sense was Ernest," he declared, "and you turned him down. I am going to take a trolley to Stamford, and the first train to New Haven."

"You are not," said his sister; "I will not desert Mr. Winthrop, and you cannot desert me."

Brother Sam sighed, and seated himself on a rock.

"Do you think, Billy," he asked, "you can get us to Cambridge in time for next year's game?"

The car limped into Stamford, and while it went into dry-dock at the garage, Brother Sam fled to the railroad station, where he learned that for the next two hours no train that recognized New Haven spoke to Stamford.

"That being so," said Winthrop, "while we are waiting for the car, we had better get a quick lunch now, and then push on."

"Push," exclaimed Brother Sam darkly, "is what we are likely to do."

After behaving with perfect propriety for half an hour, just outside of Bridgeport the Scarlet Car came to a slow and sullen stop, and once more the owner and the chauffeur hid their shame beneath it, and attacked its vitals. Twenty minutes later, while they still were at work, there approached from Bridgeport a young man in a buggy. When he saw the mass of college colors on the Scarlet Car, he pulled his horse down to a walk, and as he passed raised his hat.

"At the end of the first half," he said, "the score was a tie."

"Don't mention it," said Brother Sam.

"Now," he cried, "we've got to turn back, and make for New York. If we start quick, we may get there ahead of the last car to leave New Haven."

"I am going to New Haven, and in this car," declared his sister. "I must go—to meet Ernest."

"If Ernest has as much sense as he showed this morning," returned her affectionate brother, "Ernest will go to his Pullman and stay there. As I told you, the only sure way to get anywhere is by railroad train."

When they passed through Bridgeport it was

so late that the electric lights of Fairview Avenue were just beginning to sputter and glow in the twilight, and as they came along the shore road into New Haven, the first car out of New Haven in the race back to New York leaped at them with siren shrieks of warning, and dancing, dazzling eyes. It passed like a thing driven by the Furies; and before the Scarlet Car could swing back into what had been an empty road, in swift pursuit of the first came many more cars, with blinding searchlights, with a roar of throbbing, thrashing engines, flying pebbles, and whirling wheels, and behind these, stretching for a twisted mile, came hundreds of others; until the road was aflame with flashing will-o'-the-wisps, dancing fire-balls, and long, shifting shafts of light.

Miss Forbes sat in front, beside Winthrop, and it pleased her to imagine, as they bent forward, peering into the night, that together they were facing so many fiery dragons, speeding to give them battle, to grind them under their wheels. She felt the elation of great speed, of imminent danger. Her blood tingled with the air from the wind-swept harbor, with the rush of the great engines, as by a hand-breadth they plunged past her. She knew they were driven by men and half-grown boys, joyous with victory, piqued by defeat, reckless by one touch

too much of liquor, and that the young man at her side was driving, not only for himself, but for them.

Each fraction of a second a dazzling light blinded him, and he swerved to let the monster, with a hoarse, bellowing roar, pass by, and then again swept his car into the road. And each time for greater confidence she glanced up into his face.

Throughout the mishaps of the day he had been deeply concerned for her comfort, sorry for her disappointment, under Brother Sam's indignant ironies patient, and at all times gentle and considerate. Now, in the light from the onrushing cars, she noted his alert, laughing eyes, the broad shoulders bent across the wheel, the lips smiling with excitement and in the joy of controlling, with a turn of the wrist, a power equal to sixty galloping horses. She found in his face much comfort. And in the fact that for the moment her safety lay in his hands, a sense of pleasure. That this was her feeling puzzled and disturbed her, for to Ernest Peabody it seemed, in some way, disloyal. And yet there it was. Of a certainty, there was the secret pleasure in the thought that if they escaped unhurt from the trap in which they found themselves, it would be due to him. To herself she argued that if the chauffeur were

driving, her feeling would be the same, that it was the nerve, the skill, and the coolness, not the man, that moved her admiration. But in her heart she knew it would not be the same.

At West Haven Green Winthrop turned out of the track of the racing monsters into a quiet street leading to the railroad station, and with a half-sigh, half-laugh, leaned back comfortably.

"Those lights coming up suddenly make it hard to see," he said.

"Hard to breathe," snorted Sam; "since that first car missed us, I haven't drawn an honest breath. I held on so tight that I squeezed the hair out of the cushions."

When they reached the railroad station, and Sam had finally fought his way to the station-master, that half-crazed official informed him he had missed the departure of Mrs. Taylor Holbrooke's car by just ten minutes.

Brother Sam reported this state of affairs to his companions.

"God knows we asked for the fish first," he said; "so now we've done our duty by Ernest, who has shamefully deserted us, and we can get something to eat, and go home at our leisure. As I have always told you, the only way to travel independently is in a touring-car."

At the New Haven House they bought three waiters, body and soul, and, in spite of the fact

that in the very next room the team was breaking training, obtained an excellent but chaotic dinner; and by eight they were on their way back to the big city.

The night was grandly beautiful. The waters of the Sound flashed in the light of a cold, clear moon, which showed them, like pictures in silver print, the sleeping villages through which they passed, the ancient elms, the low-roofed cottages, the town-hall facing the common. The post road was again empty, and the car moved as steadily as a watch.

"Just because it knows we don't care now when we get there," said Brother Sam, "you couldn't make it break down with an axe."

From the rear, where he sat with Fred, he announced he was going to sleep, and asked that he be not awakened until the car had crossed the State line between Connecticut and New York. Winthrop doubted if he knew the State line of New York.

"It is where the advertisements for Besse Baker's twenty-seven stores cease," said Sam drowsily, "and the bill-posters of Ethel Barrymore begin."

In the front of the car the two young people spoke only at intervals, but Winthrop had never been so widely alert, so keenly happy, never before so conscious of her presence.

And it seemed as they glided through the mysterious moonlit world of silent villages, shadowy woods, and wind-swept bays and inlets, from which, as the car rattled over the planks of the bridges, the wild duck rose in noisy circles, they alone were awake and living.

The silence had lasted so long that it was as eloquent as words. The young man turned his eyes timorously, and sought those of the girl. What he felt was so strong in him that it seemed incredible she should be ignorant of it. His eyes searched the gray veil. In his voice there was both challenge and pleading.

"'Shall be together,'" he quoted, "'breathe and ride. So, one day more am I deified; who knows but the world may end to-night?'"

The moonlight showed the girl's eyes shining through the veil, and regarding him steadily.

"If you don't stop this car quick," she said, "the world *will* end for all of us."

He shot a look ahead, and so suddenly threw on the brake that Sam and the chauffeur tumbled awake. Across the road stretched the great bulk of a touring-car, its lamps burning dully in the brilliance of the moon. Around it, for greater warmth, a half-dozen figures stamped upon the frozen ground, and beat themselves with their arms. Sam and the chauffeur vaulted into the road, and went toward them.

"It's what you say, and the way you say it," the girl explained. She seemed to be continuing an argument. "It makes it so very difficult for us to play together."

The young man clasped the wheel as though the force he were holding in check were much greater than sixty horse-power.

"You are not married yet, are you?" he demanded.

The girl moved her head.

"And when you are married, there will probably be an altar from which you will turn to walk back up the aisle?"

"Well?" said the girl.

"Well," he answered explosively, "until you turn away from that altar, I do not recognize the right of any man to keep me quiet, or your right either. Why should I be held by your engagement? I was not consulted about it. I did not give my consent, did I? I tell you, you are the only woman in the world I will ever marry, and if you think I am going to keep silent and watch some one else carry you off without making a fight for you, you don't know me."

"If you go on," said the girl, "it will mean that I shall not see you again."

"Then I will write letters to you."

"I will not read them," said the girl.

The young man laughed defiantly.

"Oh, yes, you will read them!" He pounded his gauntleted fist on the rim of the wheel. "You mayn't answer them, but if I can write the way I feel, I will bet you'll read them."

His voice changed suddenly, and he began to plead. It was as though she were some masculine giant bullying a small boy.

"You are not fair to me," he protested. "I do not ask you to be kind, I ask you to be fair. I am fighting for what means more to me than anything in this world, and you won't even listen. Why should I recognize any other men? All I recognize is that *I* am the man who loves you, that 'I am the man at your feet.' That is all I know, that I love you."

The girl moved as though with the cold, and turned her head from him.

"I love you," repeated the young man.

The girl breathed like one who has been swimming under water, but, when she spoke, her voice was calm and contained.

"Please!" she begged, "don't you see how unfair it is? I can't go away; I *have* to listen."

The young man pulled himself upright, and pressed his lips together.

"I beg your pardon," he whispered.

There was for some time an unhappy silence,

and then Winthrop added bitterly: "'Methinks the punishment exceeds the offense.'"

"Do you think you make it easy for *me?*" returned the girl.

She considered it most ungenerous of him to sit staring into the moonlight, looking so miserable that it made her heart ache to comfort him, and so extremely handsome that to do so was quite impossible. She would have liked to reach out her hand and lay it on his arm, and tell him she was sorry, but she could not. He should not have looked so unnecessarily handsome.

Sam came running toward them with five grizzly bears, who balanced themselves apparently with some slight effort upon their hind legs. The grizzly bears were properly presented as: "Tommy Todd, of my class, and some more like him. And," continued Sam, "I am going to quit you two and go with them. Tom's car broke down, but Fred fixed it, and both our cars can travel together. Sort of convoy," he explained.

His sister signalled eagerly, but with equal eagerness he retreated from her.

"Believe me," he assured her soothingly, "I am just as good a chaperon fifty yards behind you, and wide awake, as I am in the same car and fast asleep. And, besides, I want to hear

about the game. And, what's more, two cars are much safer than one. Suppose you two break down in a lonely place? We'll be right behind you to pick you up. You will keep Winthrop's car in sight, won't you, Tommy?" he said.

The grizzly bear called Tommy, who had been examining the Scarlet Car, answered doubtfully that the only way he could keep it in sight was by tying a rope to it.

"That's all right, then," said Sam briskly, "Winthrop will go slow."

So the Scarlet Car shot forward with sometimes the second car so far in the rear that they could only faintly distinguish the horn begging them to wait, and again it would follow so close upon their wheels that they heard the five grizzly bears chanting beseechingly:

"'Oh, bring this wagon home, John,
It will not hold us a-all.'"

For some time there was silence in the Scarlet Car, and then Winthrop broke it by laughing.

"First, I lose Peabody," he explained, "then I lose Sam, and now, after I throw Fred overboard, I am going to drive you into Stamford, where they do not ask runaway couples for a license, and marry you."

The girl smiled comfortably. In that mood she was not afraid of him.

She lifted her face, and stretched out her arms as though she were drinking in the moonlight.

"It has been such a good day," she said simply, "and I am really so very happy."

"I shall be equally frank," said Winthrop. "So am I."

For two hours they had been on the road, and were just entering Fairport. For some long time the voices of the pursuing grizzlies had been lost in the far distance.

"The road's up," said Miss Forbes.

She pointed ahead to two red lanterns.

"It was all right this morning," exclaimed Winthrop.

The car was pulled down to eight miles an hour, and, trembling and snorting at the indignity, nosed up to the red lanterns.

They showed in a ruddy glow the legs of two men.

"You gotta stop!" commanded a voice.

"Why?" asked Winthrop.

The voice became embodied in the person of a tall man with a long overcoat and a drooping mustache.

"'Cause I tell you to!" snapped the tall man.

Winthrop threw a quick glance to the rear.

In that direction for a mile the road lay straight away. He could see its entire length, and it was empty. In thinking of nothing but Miss Forbes, he had forgotten the chaperon. He was impressed with the fact that the immediate presence of a chaperon was desirable. Directly in front of the car, blocking its advance, were two barrels with a two-inch plank sagging heavily between them. Beyond that the main street of Fairport lay steeped in slumber and moonlight.

"I am a selectman," said the one with the lantern. "You been exceedin' our speed limit."

The chauffeur gave a gasp that might have been construed to mean that the charge amazed and shocked him.

"That is not possible," Winthrop answered. "I have been going very slow—on purpose—to allow a disabled car to keep up with me."

The selectman looked down the road.

"It ain't kep' up with you," he said pointedly.

"It has until the last few minutes."

"It's the last few minutes we're talking about," returned the man who had not spoken. He put his foot on the step of the car.

"What are you doing?" asked Winthrop.

"I am going to take you to Judge Allen's. I am chief of police. You are under arrest."

Before Winthrop rose moving pictures of Miss Forbes appearing in a dirty police station before an officious Dogberry, and, as he and his car were well known along the post road, appearing the next morning in the New York papers. "William Winthrop," he saw the printed words, "son of Endicott Winthrop, was arrested here this evening, with a young woman who refused to give her name, but who was recognized as Miss Beatrice Forbes, whose engagement to Ernest Peabody, the Reform candidate on the Independent ticket——"

And, of course, Peabody would blame her.

"If I have exceeded your speed limit," he said politely, "I shall be delighted to pay the fine. How much is it?"

"Judge Allen'll tell you what the fine is," said the selectman gruffly. "And he may want bail."

"Bail?" demanded Winthrop. "Do you mean to tell me he will detain us here?"

"He will, if he wants to," answered the chief of police combatively.

For an instant Winthrop sat gazing gloomily ahead, overcome apparently by the enormity of his offense. He was calculating whether, if he rammed the two-inch plank, it would hit the car or Miss Forbes. He decided swiftly it would hit his new two-hundred-dollar lamps. As

swiftly he decided the new lamps must go. But he had read of guardians of the public safety so regardless of private safety as to try to puncture runaway tires with pistol bullets. He had no intention of subjecting Miss Forbes to a fusillade.

So he whirled upon the chief of police:

"Take your hand off that gun!" he growled. "How dare you threaten me?"

Amazed, the chief of police dropped from the step and advanced indignantly.

"Me?" he demanded. "I ain't got a gun. What you mean by——"

With sudden intelligence, the chauffeur precipitated himself upon the scene.

"It's the other one," he shouted. He shook an accusing finger at the selectman. "He pointed it at the lady."

To Miss Forbes the realism of Fred's acting was too convincing. To learn that one is covered with a loaded revolver is disconcerting. Miss Forbes gave a startled squeak, and ducked her head.

Winthrop roared aloud at the selectman.

"How dare you frighten the lady!" he cried. "Take your hand off that gun."

"What you talkin' about?" shouted the selectman. "The idea of my havin' a gun! I haven't got a——"

"All right, Fred!" cried Winthrop. "Low bridge."

There was a crash of shattered glass and brass, of scattered barrel staves, the smell of escaping gas, and the Scarlet Car was flying drunkenly down the main street.

"What are they doing now, Fred?" called the owner. Fred peered over the stern of the flying car.

"The constable's jumping around the road," he replied, "and the long one's leaning against a tree. No, he's climbing the tree. I can't make out *what* he's doing."

"*I* know!" cried Miss Forbes; her voice vibrated with excitement. Defiance of the law had thrilled her with unsuspected satisfaction; her eyes were dancing. "There was a telephone fastened to the tree, a hand telephone. They are sending word to some one. They're trying to head us off."

Winthrop brought the car to a quick halt.

"We're in a police trap!" he said. Fred leaned forward and whispered to his employer. His voice also vibrated with the joy of the chase.

"This'll be our *third* arrest," he said. "That means——"

"I know what it means," snapped Winthrop. "Tell me how we can get out of here."

"We can't get out of here, sir, unless we go

back. Going south, the bridge is the only way out."

"The bridge!" Winthrop struck the wheel savagely with his knuckles. "I forgot their confounded bridge!" He turned to Miss Forbes. "Fairport is a sort of island," he explained.

"But after we're across the bridge," urged the chauffeur, "we needn't keep to the post road no more. We can turn into Stone Ridge, and strike south to White Plains. Then——"

"We haven't crossed the bridge yet," growled Winthrop. His voice had none of the joy of the others; he was greatly perturbed. "Look back," he commanded, "and see if there is any sign of those boys."

He was now quite willing to share responsibility. But there was no sign of the Yale men, and, unattended, the Scarlet Car crept warily forward. Ahead of it, across the little reed-grown inlet, stretched their road of escape, a long wooden bridge, lying white in the moonlight.

"I don't see a soul," whispered Miss Forbes.

"Anybody at that draw?" asked Winthrop. Unconsciously his voice also had sunk to a whisper.

"No," returned Fred. "I think the man that tends the draw goes home at night; there is no light there."

"Well, then," said Winthrop, with an anxious sigh, "we've got to make a dash for it."

The car shot forward, and, as it leaped lightly upon the bridge, there was a rapid rumble of creaking boards.

Between it and the highway to New York lay only two hundred yards of track, straight and empty.

In his excitement, the chauffeur rose from the rear seat.

"They'll never catch us now," he muttered. "They'll never catch us!"

But even as he spoke there grated harshly the creak of rusty chains on a cogged wheel, the rattle of a brake. The black figure of a man with waving arms ran out upon the draw, and the draw gaped slowly open.

When the car halted there was between it and the broken edge of the bridge twenty feet of running water.

At the same moment from behind it came a patter of feet, and Winthrop turned to see racing toward them some dozen young men of Fairport. They surrounded him with noisy, raucous, belligerent cries. They were, as they proudly informed him, members of the Fairport "Volunteer Fire Department." That they might purchase new uniforms, they had arranged a trap for the automobiles returning in

illegal haste from New Haven. In fines they had collected $300, and it was evident that already some of that money had been expended in bad whiskey. As many as could do so crowded into the car, others hung to the running boards and step, others ran beside it. They rejoiced over Winthrop's unsuccessful flight and capture with violent and humiliating laughter.

For the day, Judge Allen had made a temporary court in the club-room of the fire department, which was over the engine-house; and the proceedings were brief and decisive. The selectman told how Winthrop, after first breaking the speed law, had broken arrest, and Judge Allen, refusing to fine him and let him go, held him and his companions for a hearing the following morning. He fixed the amount of bail at $500 each; failing to pay this, they would for the night be locked up in different parts of the engine-house, which, it developed, contained on the ground-floor the home of the fire-engine, on the second floor the club-room, on alternate nights, of the firemen, the local G. A. R., and the Knights of Pythias, and in its cellar the town jail.

Winthrop and the chauffeur the learned judge condemned to the cells in the basement. As a concession, he granted Miss Forbes the freedom of the entire club-room to herself.

The objections raised by Winthrop to this arrangement were of a nature so violent, so vigorous, at one moment so specious and conciliatory, and the next so abusive, that his listeners were moved by awe, but not to pity.

In his indignation, Judge Allen rose to reply, and as, the better to hear him, the crowd pushed forward, Fred gave way before it, until he was left standing in sullen gloom upon its outer edge. In imitation of the real firemen of the great cities, the vamps of Fairport had cut a circular hole in the floor of their club-room, and from the engine-room below had reared a sliding pole of shining brass. When leaving their club-room, it was always their pleasure to scorn the stairs and, like real firemen, slide down this pole. It had not escaped the notice of Fred, and since his entrance he had been gravitating toward it.

As the voice of the judge rose in violent objurgation, and all eyes were fixed upon him, the chauffeur crooked his leg tightly about the brass pole, and, like the devil in the pantomime, sank softly and swiftly through the floor.

The irate judge was shaking his finger in Winthrop's face.

"Don't you try to teach me no law," he shouted; "I know what I can do. Ef *my* darter went gallivantin' around nights in one of them automobiles, it would serve her right to get

locked up. Maybe this young woman will learn to stay at home nights with her folks. She ain't goin' to take no harm here. The constable sits up all night downstairs in the fire-engine-room, and that sofa's as good a place to sleep as the hotel. If you want me to let her go to the hotel, why don't you send to your folks and bail her out?"

"You know damn well why I don't," returned Winthrop. "I don't intend to give the newspapers and you and these other idiots the chance to annoy her further. This young lady's brother has been with us all day; he left us only by accident, and by forcing her to remain here alone you are acting outrageously. If you knew anything of decency, or law, you'd——"

"I know this much!" roared the justice triumphantly, pointing his spectacle-case at Miss Forbes. "I know her name ain't Lizzie Borden, and yours ain't Charley Ross."

Winthrop crossed to where Miss Forbes stood in a corner. She still wore her veil, but through it, though her face was pale, she smiled at him.

His own distress was undisguised.

"I can never forgive myself," he said.

"Nonsense!" replied Miss Forbes briskly. "You were perfectly right. If we had sent for any one, it would have had to come out. Now,

we'll pay the fine in the morning and get home, and no one will know anything of it excepting the family and Mr. Peabody, and they'll understand. But if I ever lay hands on my brother Sam!"—she clasped her fingers together helplessly. "To think of his leaving you to spend the night in a cell——"

Winthrop interrupted her.

"I will get one of these men to send his wife or sister over to stay with you," he said.

But Miss Forbes protested that she did not want a companion. The constable would protect her, she said, and she would sit up all night and read. She nodded at the periodicals on the club table.

"This is the only chance I may ever have," she said, "to read the *Police Gazette!*"

"You ready there?" called the constable.

"Good-night," said Winthrop.

Under the eyes of the grinning yokels, they shook hands.

"Good-night," said the girl.

"Where's your young man?" demanded the chief of police.

"My what?" inquired Winthrop.

"The young fellow that was with you when we held you up that first time."

The constable, or the chief of police as he called himself, on the principle that if there

were only one policeman he must necessarily be the chief, glanced hastily over the heads of the crowd.

"Any of you holding that shoffer?" he called.

No one was holding the chauffeur.

The chauffeur had vanished.

The cell to which the constable led Winthrop was in a corner of the cellar in which formerly coal had been stored. This corner was now fenced off with boards, and a wooden door with chain and padlock.

High in the wall, on a level with the ground, was the opening, or window, through which the coal had been dumped. This window now was barricaded with iron bars. Winthrop tested the door by shaking it, and landed a heavy kick on one of the hinges. It gave slightly, and emitted a feeble groan.

"What you tryin' to do?" demanded the constable. "That's town property."

In the light of the constable's lantern, Winthrop surveyed his cell with extreme dissatisfaction.

"I call this a cheap cell," he said.

"It's good enough for a cheap sport," returned the constable. It was so overwhelming a retort that after the constable had turned the key in the padlock, and taken himself and his lantern to the floor above, Winthrop could hear

him repeating it to the volunteer firemen. They received it with delighted howls.

For an hour, on the three empty boxes that formed his bed, Winthrop sat, with his chin on his fist, planning the nameless atrocities he would inflict upon the village of Fairport. Compared to his tortures, those of Nuremberg were merely reprimands. Also he considered the particular punishment he would mete out to Sam Forbes for his desertion of his sister, and to Fred. He could not understand Fred. It was not like the chauffeur to think only of himself. Nevertheless, for abandoning Miss Forbes in the hour of need, Fred must be discharged. He had, with some regret, determined upon this discipline, when from directly over his head the voice of Fred hailed him cautiously.

"Mr. Winthrop," the voice called, "are you there?"

To Winthrop the question seemed superfluous. He jumped to his feet, and peered up into the darkness.

"Where are *you?*" he demanded.

"At the window," came the answer. "We're in the back yard. Mr. Sam wants to speak to you."

On Miss Forbes's account, Winthrop gave a gasp of relief. On his own, one of savage satisfaction.

"And *I* want to speak to *him!*" he whispered.

The moonlight, which had been faintly shining through the iron bars of the coal chute, was eclipsed by a head and shoulders. The comfortable voice of Sam Forbes greeted him in a playful whisper.

"Hullo, Billy! You down there?"

"Where the devil did you think I was?" Winthrop answered at white heat. "Let me tell you if I was not down here I'd be punching your head."

"That's all right, Billy," Sam answered soothingly. "But I'll save you just the same. It shall never be said of Sam Forbes he deserted a comrade——"

"Stop that! Do you know," Winthrop demanded fiercely, "that your sister is a prisoner upstairs?"

"I do," replied the unfeeling brother, "but she won't be long. All the low-comedy parts are out now arranging a rescue."

"Who are? Todd and those boys?" demanded Winthrop. "They mustn't think of it! They'll only make it worse. It is impossible to get your sister out of here with those drunken firemen in the building. You must wait till they've gone home. Do you hear me?"

"Pardon *me!*" returned Sam stiffly, "but

The moonlight . . . was eclipsed by a head and shoulders.

this is *my* relief expedition. I have sent two of the boys to hold the bridge, like Horatius, and two to guard the motors, and the others are going to entice the firemen away from the engine-house."

"Entice them? How?" demanded Winthrop. "They're drunk, and they won't leave here till morning."

Outside the engine-house, suspended from a heavy cross-bar, was a steel rail borrowed from a railroad track, and bent into a hoop. When hit with a sledge-hammer it proclaimed to Fairport that the "consuming element" was at large.

At the moment Winthrop asked his question, over the village of Fairport and over the bay and marshes, and far out across the Sound, the great steel bar sent forth a shuddering boom of warning.

From the room above came a wild tumult of joyous yells.

"Fire!" shrieked the vamps, "fire!"

The two men crouching by the cellar window heard the rush of feet, the engine banging and bumping across the sidewalk, its brass bell clanking crazily, the happy vamps shouting hoarse, incoherent orders.

Through the window Sam lowered a bag of tools he had taken from Winthrop's car.

"Can you open the lock with any of these?" he asked.

"I can kick it open!" yelled Winthrop joyfully. "Get to your sister, quick!"

He threw his shoulder against the door, and the staples flying before him sent him sprawling in the coal-dust. When he reached the head of the stairs, Beatrice Forbes was descending from the club-room, and in front of the door the two cars, with their lamps unlit and numbers hidden, were panting to be free.

And in the north, reaching to the sky, rose a roaring column of flame, shameless in the pale moonlight, dragging into naked day the sleeping village, the shingled houses, the clock-face in the church steeple.

"What the devil have you done?" gasped Winthrop.

Before he answered, Sam waited until the cars were rattling to safety across the bridge.

"We have been protecting the face of nature," he shouted. "The only way to get that gang out of the engine-house was to set fire to something. Tommy wanted to burn up the railroad station, because he doesn't like the New York and New Haven, and Fred was for setting fire to Judge Allen's house, because he was rude to Beatrice. But we finally formed the Village Improvement Society, organized to burn all

advertising signs. You know those that stood in the marshes, and hid the view from the trains, so that you could not see the Sound. We chopped them down and put them in a pile, and poured gasolene on them, and that fire is all that is left of the pickles, fly-screens, and pills."

It was midnight when the cars drew up at the door of the house of Forbes. Anxiously waiting in the library were Mrs. Forbes and Ernest Peabody.

"At last!" cried Mrs. Forbes, smiling her relief; "we thought maybe Sam and you had decided to spend the night in New Haven."

"No," said Miss Forbes, "there *was* some talk about spending the night at Fairport, but we pushed right on."

II

THE TRESPASSERS

With a long, nervous shudder, the Scarlet Car came to a stop, and the lamps bored a round hole in the night, leaving the rest of the encircling world in a chill and silent darkness.

The lamps showed a flickering picture of a country road between high banks covered with loose stones, and overhead, a fringe of pine boughs. It looked like a colored photograph thrown from a stereopticon in a darkened theatre.

From the back of the car the voice of the owner said briskly: "We will now sing that beautiful ballad entitled 'He Is Sleeping in the Yukon Vale To-night.' What are you stopping for, Fred?" he asked.

The tone of the chauffeur suggested he was again upon the defensive.

"For water, sir," he mumbled.

Miss Forbes in the front seat laughed, and her brother in the rear seat groaned in dismay.

"Oh, for water?" said the owner cordially. "I thought maybe it was for coal."

Save a dignified silence, there was no answer to this, until there came a rolling of loose stones and the sound of a heavy body suddenly precipitated down the bank, and landing with a thump in the road.

"He didn't get the water," said the owner sadly.

"Are you hurt, Fred?" asked the girl.

The chauffeur limped in front of the lamps, appearing suddenly, like an actor stepping into the lime-light.

"No, ma'am," he said. In the rays of the lamp, he unfolded a road map and scowled at it. He shook his head aggrievedly.

"There *ought* to be a house just about here," he explained.

"There *ought* to be a hotel and a garage, and a cold supper, just about here," said the girl cheerfully.

"That's the way with those houses," complained the owner. "They never stay where they're put. At night they go around and visit each other. Where do you think you are, Fred?"

"I think we're in that long woods, between Loon Lake and Stoughton on the Boston Pike," said the chauffeur, "and," he reiterated, "there *ought* to be a house somewhere about here—where we get water."

"Well, get there, then, and get the water," commanded the owner.

"But I can't get there, sir, till I get the water," returned the chauffeur.

He shook out two collapsible buckets, and started down the shaft of light.

"I won't be more nor five minutes," he called.

"I'm going with him," said the girl. "I'm cold."

She stepped down from the front seat, and the owner with sudden alacrity vaulted the door and started after her.

"You coming?" he inquired of Ernest Peabody. But Ernest Peabody being soundly asleep made no reply. Winthrop turned to Sam. "Are *you* coming?" he repeated.

The tone of the invitation seemed to suggest that a refusal would not necessarily lead to a quarrel.

"I am *not!*" said the brother. "You've kept Peabody and me twelve hours in the open air, and it's past two, and we're going to sleep. You can take it from me that we are going to spend the rest of this night here in this road."

He moved his cramped joints cautiously, and stretched his legs the full width of the car.

"If you can't get plain water," he called, "get club soda."

He buried his nose in the collar of his fur coat,

and the odors of camphor and raccoon skins instantly assailed him, but he only yawned luxuriously and disappeared into the coat as a turtle draws into its shell. From the woods about him the smell of the pine needles pressed upon him like a drug, and before the footsteps of his companions were lost in the silence he was asleep. But his sleep was only a review of his waking hours. Still on either hand rose flying dust clouds and twirling leaves; still on either side raced gray stone walls, telegraph poles, hills rich in autumn colors; and before him a long white road, unending, interminable, stretching out finally into a darkness lit by flashing shop-windows, like open fireplaces, by street lamps, by swinging electric globes, by the blinding searchlights of hundreds of darting trolley cars with terrifying gongs, and then a cold white mist, and again on every side, darkness, except where the four great lamps blazed a path through stretches of ghostly woods.

As the two young men slumbered, the lamps spluttered and sizzled like bacon in a frying-pan, a stone rolled noisily down the bank, a white owl, both appalled and fascinated by the dazzling eyes of the monster blocking the road, hooted, and flapped itself away. But the men in the car only shivered slightly, deep in the sleep of utter weariness.

In silence the girl and Winthrop followed the chauffeur. They had passed out of the light of the lamps, and in the autumn mist the electric torch of the owner was as ineffective as a glow-worm. The mystery of the forest fell heavily upon them. From their feet the dead leaves sent up a clean, damp odor, and on either side and overhead the giant pine-trees whispered and rustled in the night wind.

"Take my coat, too," said the young man. "You'll catch cold." He spoke with authority and began to slip the loops from the big horn buttons. It was not the habit of the girl to consider her health. Nor did she permit the members of her family to show solicitude concerning it. But the anxiety of the young man did not seem to offend her. She thanked him generously. "No; these coats are hard to walk in, and I want to walk," she exclaimed. "I like to hear the leaves rustle when you kick them, don't you? When I was so high, I used to pretend it was wading in the surf."

The young man moved over to the gutter of the road where the leaves were deepest and kicked violently. "And the more noise you make," he said, "the more you frighten away the wild animals."

The girl shuddered in a most helpless and fascinating fashion.

"Don't!" she whispered. "I didn't mention it, but already I have seen several lions crouching behind the trees."

"Indeed?" said the young man. His tone was preoccupied. He had just kicked a rock, hidden by the leaves, and was standing on one leg.

"Do you mean you don't believe me?" asked the girl, "or is it that you are merely brave?"

"Merely brave!" exclaimed the young man. "Massachusetts is so far north for lions," he continued, "that I fancy what you saw was a grizzly bear. But I have my trusty electric torch with me, and if there is anything a bear cannot abide, it is to be pointed at by an electric torch."

"Let us pretend," cried the girl, "that we are the babes in the wood, and that we are lost."

"We don't have to pretend we're lost," said the man; "and as I remember it, the babes came to a sad end. Didn't they die, and didn't the birds bury them with leaves?"

"Sam and Mr. Peabody can be the birds," suggested the girl.

"Sam and Peabody hopping around with leaves in their teeth would look silly," objected the man. "I doubt if I could keep from laughing."

"Then," said the girl, "they can be the wicked robbers who came to kill the babes."

"Very well," said the man with suspicious alacrity, "let us be babes. If I have to die," he went on heartily, "I would rather die with you than live with any one else."

When he had spoken, although they were entirely alone in the world and quite near to each other, it was as though the girl could not hear him, even as though he had not spoken at all. After a silence, the girl said: "Perhaps it would be better for us to go back to the car."

"I won't do it again," begged the man.

"We will pretend," cried the girl, "that the car is a van and that we are gypsies, and we'll build a camp-fire, and I will tell your fortune."

"You are the only woman who can," muttered the young man.

The girl still stood in her tracks.

"You said—" she began.

"I know," interrupted the man, "but you won't let me talk seriously, so I joke. But some day——"

"Oh, look!" cried the girl. "There's Fred."

She ran from him down the road. The young man followed her slowly, his fists deep in the pockets of the great-coat, and kicking at the unoffending leaves.

The chauffeur was peering through a double

iron gate hung between square brick posts. The lower hinge of one gate was broken, and that gate lurched forward, leaving an opening. By the light of the electric torch they could see the beginning of a driveway, rough and weed-grown, lined with trees of great age and bulk, and an unkempt lawn, strewn with bushes, and beyond, in an open place bare of trees and illuminated faintly by the stars, the shadow of a house, black, silent, and forbidding.

"That's it," whispered the chauffeur. "I was here before. The well is over there."

The young man gave a gasp of astonishment.

"Why," he protested, "this is the Carey place! I should say we *were* lost. We must have left the road an hour ago. There's not another house within miles." But he made no movement to enter. "Of all places!" he muttered.

"Well, then," urged the girl briskly, "if there's no other house, let's tap Mr. Carey's well and get on."

"Do you know who he is?" asked the man.

The girl laughed. "You don't need a letter of introduction to take a bucket of water, do you?" she said.

"It's Philip Carey's house. He lives here." He spoke in a whisper, and insistently, as though the information must carry some special sig-

nificance. But the girl showed no sign of enlightenment. "You remember the Carey boys?" he urged. "They left Harvard the year I entered. They *had* to leave. They were quite mad. All the Careys have been mad. The boys were queer even then, and awfully rich. Henry ran away with a girl from a shoe factory in Brockton and lives in Paris, and Philip was sent here."

"*Sent* here?" repeated the girl. Unconsciously her voice also had sunk to a whisper.

"He has a doctor and a nurse and keepers, and they live here all the year round. When Fred said there were people hereabouts, I thought we might strike them for something to eat, or even to put up for the night, but, Philip Carey! I shouldn't fancy——"

"I should think not!" exclaimed the girl.

For a minute the three stood silent, peering through the iron bars.

"And the worst of it is," went on the young man irritably, "he could give us such good things to eat."

"It doesn't look it," said the girl.

"I know," continued the man in the same eager whisper. "But—who was it telling me? Some doctor I know who came down to see him. He said Carey does himself awfully well, has the house full of bully pictures, and the family

plate, and wonderful collections—things he picked up in the East—gold ornaments, and jewels, and jade."

"I shouldn't think," said the girl in the same hushed voice, "they would let him live so far from any neighbors with such things in the house. Suppose burglars——"

"Burglars! Burglars would never hear of this place. How could they? Even his friends think it's just a private mad-house."

The girl shivered and drew back from the gate.

Fred coughed apologetically.

"*I've* heard of it," he volunteered. "There was a piece in the *Sunday Post*. It said he eats his dinner in a diamond crown, and all the walls is gold, and two monkeys wait on table with gold——"

"Nonsense!" said the man sharply. "He eats like any one else and dresses like any one else. How far is the well from the house?"

"It's purty near," said the chauffeur.

"Pretty near the house, or pretty near here?"

"Just outside the kitchen; and it makes a creaky noise."

"You mean you don't want to go?"

Fred's answer was unintelligible.

"You wait here with Miss Forbes," said the young man. "And I'll get the water."

"Yes, sir!" said Fred, quite distinctly.

"No, sir!" said Miss Forbes, with equal distinctness. "I'm not going to be left here alone —with all these trees. I'm going with you."

"There may be a dog," suggested the young man, "or, I was thinking if they heard me prowling about, they might take a shot—just for luck. Why don't you go back to the car with Fred?"

"Down that long road in the dark?" exclaimed the girl. "Do you think I have no imagination?"

The man in front, the girl close on his heels, and the boy with the buckets following, crawled through the broken gate, and moved cautiously up the gravel driveway.

Within fifty feet of the house the courage of the chauffeur returned.

"You wait here," he whispered, "and if I wake 'em up, you shout to 'em that it's all right, that it's only me."

"Your idea being," said the young man, "that they will then fire at me. Clever lad. Run along."

There was a rustling of the dead weeds, and instantly the chauffeur was swallowed in the encompassing shadows.

Miss Forbes leaned toward the young man.

"Do you see a light in that lower story?" she whispered.

"No," said the man. "Where?"

After a pause the girl answered: "I can't see it now, either. Maybe I didn't see it. It was very faint—just a glow—it might have been phosphorescence."

"It might," said the man. He gave a shrug of distaste. "The whole place is certainly old enough and decayed enough."

For a brief space they stood quite still, and at once, accentuated by their own silence, the noises of the night grew in number and distinctness. A slight wind had risen and the boughs of the pines rocked restlessly, making mournful complaint; and at their feet the needles dropping in a gentle desultory shower had the sound of rain in spring-time. From every side they were startled by noises they could not place. Strange movements and rustlings caused them to peer sharply into the shadows; footsteps, that seemed to approach, and then, having marked them, skulk away; branches of bushes that suddenly swept together, as though closing behind some one in stealthy retreat. Although they knew that in the deserted garden they were alone, they felt that from the shadows they were being spied upon, that the darkness of the place was peopled by malign presences.

The young man drew a cigar from his case and put it unlit between his teeth.

"Cheerful, isn't it?" he growled. "These

dead leaves make it damp as a tomb. If I've seen one ghost, I've seen a dozen. I believe we're standing in the Carey family's graveyard."

"I thought you were brave," said the girl.

"I am," returned the young man, "very brave. But if you had the most wonderful girl on earth to take care of in the grounds of a mad-house at two in the morning, you'd be scared too."

He was abruptly surprised by Miss Forbes laying her hand firmly upon his shoulder and turning him in the direction of the house. Her face was so near his that he felt the uneven fluttering of her breath upon his cheek.

"There is a man," she said, "standing behind that tree."

By the faint light of the stars he saw, in black silhouette, a shoulder and head projecting from beyond the trunk of a huge oak, and then quickly withdrawn. The owner of the head and shoulder was on the side of the tree nearest to themselves, his back turned to them, and so deeply was his attention engaged that he was unconscious of their presence.

"He is watching the house," said the girl. "Why is he doing that?"

"I think it's Fred," whispered the man. "He's afraid to go for the water. That's as far as he's gone." He was about to move for-

ward when from the oak-tree there came a low whistle. The girl and the man stood silent and motionless. But they knew it was useless; that they had been overheard. A voice spoke cautiously.

"That you?" it asked.

With the idea only of gaining time, the young man responded promptly and truthfully. "Yes," he whispered.

"Keep to the right of the house," commanded the voice.

The young man seized Miss Forbes by the wrist and moving to the right drew her quickly with him. He did not stop until they had turned the corner of the building and were once more hidden by the darkness.

"The plot thickens," he said. "I take it that that fellow is a keeper, or watchman. He spoke as though it were natural there should be another man in the grounds, so there's probably two of them, either to keep Carey in or to keep trespassers out. Now, I think I'll go back and tell him that Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water, and that all they want is to be allowed to get the water, and go."

"Why should a watchman hide behind a tree?" asked the girl. "And why——"

She ceased abruptly with a sharp cry of fright. "What's that?" she whispered.

"What's what?" asked the young man, startled. "What did you hear?"

"Over there," stammered the girl. "Something—that—groaned."

"Pretty soon this will get on my nerves," said the man. He ripped open his great-coat and reached under it. "I've been stoned twice, when there were women in the car," he said, apologetically, "and so now at night I carry a gun." He shifted the darkened torch to his left hand, and, moving a few yards, halted to listen. The girl, reluctant to be left alone, followed slowly. As he stood immovable there came from the leaves just beyond him the sound of a feeble struggle, and a strangled groan. The man bent forward and flashed the torch. He saw stretched rigid on the ground a huge wolfhound. Its legs were twisted horribly, the lips drawn away from the teeth, the eyes glazed in an agony of pain. The man snapped off the light. "Keep back!" he whispered to the girl. He took her by the arm and ran with her toward the gate.

"Who was it?" she begged.

"It was a dog," he answered. "I think——"

He did not tell her what he thought.

"I've got to find out what the devil has happened to Fred!" he said. "You go back to the car. Send your brother here on the run. Tell

him there's going to be a rough-house. You're not afraid to go?"

"No," said the girl.

A shadow blacker than the night rose suddenly before them, and a voice asked sternly but quietly: "What are you doing here?"

The young man lifted his arm clear of the girl, and shoved her quickly from him. In his hand she felt the pressure of the revolver.

"Well," he replied truculently, "and what are you doing here?"

"I am the night watchman," answered the voice. "Who are you?"

It struck Miss Forbes if the watchman knew that one of the trespassers was a woman he would be at once reassured, and she broke in quickly:

"We have lost our way," she said pleasantly. "We came here——"

She found herself staring blindly down a shaft of light. For an instant the torch held her, and then from her swept over the young man.

"Drop that gun!" cried the voice. It was no longer the same voice; it was now savage and snarling. For answer the young man pressed the torch in his left hand, and, held in the two circles of light, the men surveyed each other. The newcomer was one of unusual bulk

and height. The collar of his overcoat hid his mouth, and his derby hat was drawn down over his forehead, but what they saw showed an intelligent, strong face, although for the moment it wore a menacing scowl. The young man dropped his revolver into his pocket.

"My automobile ran dry," he said; "we came in here to get some water. My chauffeur is back there somewhere with a couple of buckets. This is Mr. Carey's place, isn't it?"

"Take that light out of my eyes!" said the watchman.

"Take your light out of my eyes," returned the young man. "You can see we're not—we don't mean any harm."

The two lights disappeared simultaneously, and then each, as though worked by the same hand, sprang forth again.

"What did you think I was going to do?" the young man asked. He laughed and switched off his torch.

But the one the watchman held in his hand still moved from the face of the girl to that of the young man.

"How'd you know this was the Carey house?" he demanded. "Do you know Mr. Carey?"

"No, but I know this is his house."

For a moment from behind his mask of light

the watchman surveyed them in silence. Then he spoke quickly:

"I'll take you to him," he said, "if he thinks it's all right, it's all right."

The girl gave a protesting cry. The young man burst forth indignantly:

"You will *not!*" he cried. "Don't be an idiot! You talk like a Tenderloin cop. Do we look like second-story workers?"

"I found you prowling around Mr. Carey's grounds at two in the morning," said the watchman sharply, "with a gun in your hand. My job is to protect this place, and I am going to take you both to Mr. Carey."

Until this moment the young man could see nothing save the shaft of light and the tiny glowing bulb at its base; now into the light there protruded a black revolver.

"Keep your hands up, and walk ahead of me to the house," commanded the watchman. "The woman will go in front."

The young man did not move. Under his breath he muttered impotently, and bit at his lower lip.

"See here," he said, "I'll go with you, but you shan't take this lady in front of that madman. Let her go to her car. It's only a hundred yards from here; you know perfectly well she——"

"I know where your car is, all right," said the watchman steadily, "and I'm not going to let you get away in it till Mr. Carey's seen you." The revolver motioned forward. Miss Forbes stepped in front of it and appealed eagerly to the young man.

"Do what he says," she urged. "It's only his duty. Please! Indeed, I don't mind." She turned to the watchman. "Which way do you want us to go?" she asked.

"Keep in the light," he ordered.

The light showed the broad steps leading to the front entrance of the house, and in its shaft they climbed them, pushed open the unlocked door, and stood in a small hallway. It led into a greater hall beyond. By the electric lights still burning they noted that the interior of the house was as rich and well cared for as the outside was miserable. With a gesture for silence the watchman motioned them into a small room on the right of the hallway. It had the look of an office, and was apparently the place in which were conducted the affairs of the estate.

In an open grate was a dying fire; in front of it a flat desk covered with papers and japanned tin boxes.

"You stay here till I fetch Mr. Carey and the servants," commanded the watchman. "Don't try to get out, and," he added menacingly,

"don't make no noise." With his revolver he pointed at the two windows. They were heavily barred. "Those bars keep Mr. Carey in," he said, "and I guess they can keep you in, too. The other watchman," he added, "will be just outside this door." But still he hesitated, glowering with suspicion; unwilling to trust them alone. His face lit with an ugly smile.

"Mr. Carey's very bad to-night," he said; "he won't keep his bed and he's wandering about the house. If he found you by yourselves, he might——"

The young man, who had been staring at the fire, swung sharply on his heel.

"Get-to-hell-out-of-here!" he said.

The watchman stepped into the hall and was cautiously closing the door when a man sprang lightly up the front steps. Through the inch crack left by the open door the trespassers heard the newcomer's eager greeting.

"I can't get him right!" he panted. "He's snoring like a hog."

The watchman exclaimed savagely:

"He's fooling you." He gasped. "I didn't mor' nor slap him. Did you throw water on him?"

"I drowned him!" returned the other. "He never winked. I tell you we gotta walk, and damn quick!"

"Walk!" The watchman cursed him foully. "How far could we walk? *I'll* bring him to," he swore. "He's scared of us, and he's shamming." He gave a sudden start of alarm. "That's it, he's shamming. You fool! You shouldn't have left him."

There was the swift patter of retreating footsteps, and then a sudden halt, and they heard the watchman command: "Go back, and keep the other two till I come."

The next instant from the outside the door was softly closed upon them.

It had no more than shut when to the surprise of Miss Forbes the young man, with a delighted and vindictive chuckle, sprang to the desk and began to drum upon it with his fingers. It was as though he were practising upon a typewriter.

"He missed *these*," he muttered jubilantly. The girl leaned forward. Beneath his fingers she saw, flush with the table, a roll of little ivory buttons. She read the words, "Stables," "Servants' hall." She raised a pair of very beautiful and very bewildered eyes.

"But if he wanted the servants, why didn't the watchman do that?" she asked.

"Because he isn't a watchman," answered the young man. "Because he's robbing this house."

He took the revolver from his encumbering

great-coat, slipped it in his pocket, and threw the coat from him. He motioned the girl into a corner. "Keep out of the line of the door," he ordered.

"I don't understand," begged the girl.

"They came in a car," whispered the young man. "It's broken down, and they can't get away. When the big fellow stopped us and I flashed my torch, I saw their car behind him in the road with the front off and the lights out. He'd seen the lamps of our car, and now they want it to escape in. That's why he brought us here—to keep us away from our car."

"And Fred!" gasped the girl. "Fred's hurt!"

"I guess Fred stumbled into the big fellow," assented the young man, "and the big fellow put him out; then he saw Fred was a chauffeur, and now they are trying to bring him to, so that he can run the car for them. You needn't worry about Fred. He's been in four smash-ups."

The young man bent forward to listen, but from no part of the great house came any sign. He exclaimed angrily.

"They must be drugged," he growled. He ran to the desk and made vicious jabs at the ivory buttons.

"Suppose they're out of order!" he whispered.

There was the sound of leaping feet. The

young man laughed nervously. "No, it's all right," he cried. "They're coming!"

The door flung open and the big burglar and a small, rat-like figure of a man burst upon them, the big one pointing a revolver.

"Come with me to your car!" he commanded. "You've got to take us to Boston. Quick, or I'll blow your face off."

Although the young man glared bravely at the steel barrel and the lifted trigger, poised a few inches from his eyes, his body, as though weak with fright, shifted slightly, and his feet made a shuffling noise upon the floor. When the weight of his body was balanced on the ball of his right foot, the shuffling ceased. Had the burglar lowered his eyes, the manœuvre to him would have been significant, but his eyes were following the barrel of the revolver.

In the mind of the young man the one thought uppermost was that he must gain time, but, with a revolver in his face, he found his desire to gain time swiftly diminishing. Still, when he spoke, it was with deliberation.

"My chauffeur—" he began slowly.

The burglar snapped at him like a dog. "To hell with your chauffeur!" he cried. "Your chauffeur has run away. You'll drive that car yourself, or I'll leave you here with the top of your head off."

The face of the young man suddenly flashed with pleasure. His eyes, looking past the burglar to the door, lit with relief.

"There's the chauffeur now!" he cried.

The big burglar for one instant glanced over his right shoulder.

For months at a time, on Soldiers' Field, the young man had thrown himself at human targets, that ran and dodged and evaded him, and the hulking burglar, motionless before him, was easily his victim.

He leaped at him, his left arm swinging like a scythe, and, with the impact of a club, the blow caught the burglar in the throat.

The pistol went off impotently; the burglar with a choking cough sank in a heap on the floor.

The young man tramped over him and upon him, and beat the second burglar with savage, whirlwind blows. The second burglar, shrieking with pain, turned to fly, and a fist, that fell upon him where his bump of honesty should have been, drove his head against the lintel of the door.

At the same instant from the belfry on the roof there rang out on the night the sudden tumult of a bell; a bell that told as plainly as though it clamored with a human tongue, that the hand that rang it was driven with fear; fear

of fire, fear of thieves, fear of a madman with a knife in his hand running amuck; perhaps at that moment creeping up the belfry stairs.

From all over the house there was the rush of feet and men's voices, and from the garden the light of dancing lanterns. And while the smoke of the revolver still hung motionless, the open door was crowded with half-clad figures. At their head were two young men. One who had drawn over his night-clothes a serge suit, and who, in even that garb, carried an air of authority; and one, tall, stooping, weak of face and light-haired, with eyes that blinked and trembled behind great spectacles, and who, for comfort, hugged about him a gorgeous kimono. For an instant the newcomers stared stupidly through the smoke at the bodies on the floor breathing stertorously, at the young man with the lust of battle still in his face, at the girl shrinking against the wall. It was the young man in the serge suit who was the first to move.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"These are burglars," said the owner of the car. "We happened to be passing in my automobile, and——"

The young man was no longer listening. With an alert, professional manner he had stooped over the big burglar. With his thumb he pushed back the man's eyelids, and ran his

fingers over his throat and chin. He felt carefully of the point of the chin, and glanced up.

"You've broken the bone," he said.

"I just swung on him," said the young man. He turned his eyes, and suggested the presence of the girl.

At the same moment the man in the kimono cried nervously: "Ladies present, ladies present. Go put your clothes on, everybody; put your clothes on."

For orders the men in the doorway looked to the young man with the stern face.

He scowled at the figure in the kimono.

"You will please go to your room, sir," he said. He stood up, and bowed to Miss Forbes. "I beg your pardon," he asked, "you must want to get out of this. Will you please go into the library?"

He turned to the robust youths in the door, and pointed at the second burglar.

"Move him out of the way," he ordered.

The man in the kimono smirked and bowed.

"Allow me," he said; "allow me to show you to the library. This is no place for ladies."

The young man with the stern face frowned impatiently.

"You will please return to your room, sir," he repeated.

With an attempt at dignity the figure in the

kimono gathered the silk robe closer about him.

"Certainly," he said. "If you think you can get on without me—I will retire," and lifting his bare feet mincingly, he tiptoed away. Miss Forbes looked after him with an expression of relief, of repulsion, of great pity.

The owner of the car glanced at the young man with the stern face, and raised his eyebrows interrogatively.

The young man had taken the revolver from the limp fingers of the burglar and was holding it in his hand. Winthrop gave what was half a laugh and half a sigh of compassion.

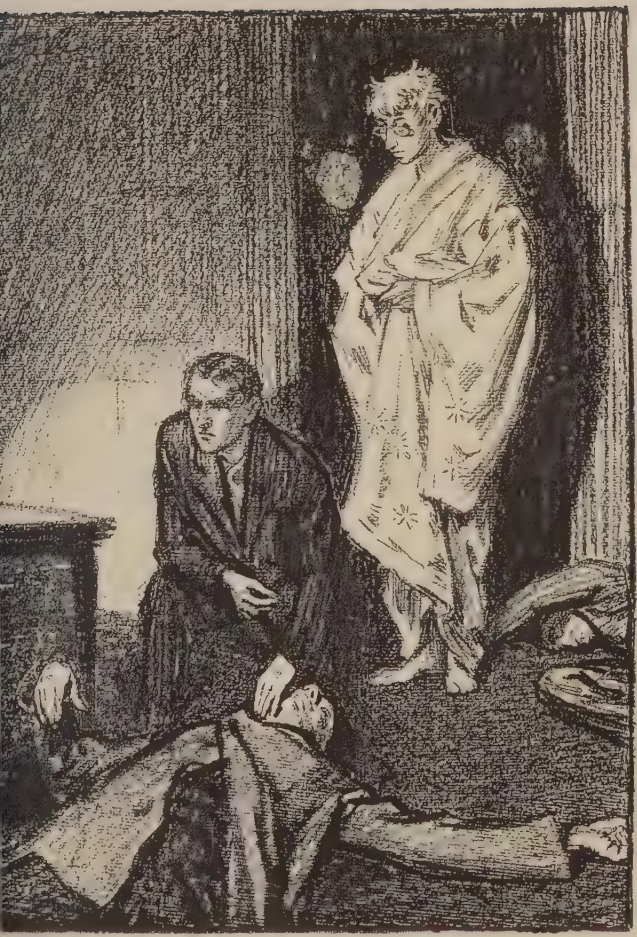
"So, that's Carey?" he said.

There was a sudden silence. The young man with the stern face made no answer. His head was bent over the revolver. He broke it open, and spilled the cartridges into his palm. Still he made no answer. When he raised his head, his eyes were no longer stern, but wistful, and filled with an inexpressible loneliness.

"No, *I* am Carey," he said.

The one who had blundered stood helpless, tongue-tied, with no presence of mind beyond knowing that to explain would offend further.

The other seemed to feel for him more than for himself. In a voice low and peculiarly appealing, he continued hurriedly.



"You've broken the bone," he said.

"He is my doctor," he said. "He is a young man, and he has not had many advantages—his manner is not—I find we do not get on together. I have asked them to send me some one else." He stopped suddenly, and stood unhappily silent. The knowledge that the strangers were acquainted with his story seemed to rob him of his earlier confidence. He made an uncertain movement as though to relieve them of his presence.

Miss Forbes stepped toward him eagerly.

"You told me I might wait in the library," she said. "Will you take me there?"

For a moment the man did not move, but stood looking at the young and beautiful girl, who, with a smile, hid the compassion in her eyes.

"Will you go?" he asked wistfully.

"Why not?" said the girl.

The young man laughed with pleasure.

"I am unpardonable," he said. "I live so much alone—that I forget." Like one who, issuing from a close room, encounters the morning air, he drew a deep, happy breath. "It has been three years since a woman has been in this house," he said simply. "And I have not even thanked you," he went on, "nor asked you if you are cold," he cried remorsefully, "or hungry. How nice it would be if you would say you are hungry."

The girl walked beside him, laughing lightly, and, as they disappeared into the greater hall beyond, Winthrop heard her cry: "You never robbed your own ice-chest? How have you kept from starving? Show me it, and we'll rob it together."

The voice of their host rang through the empty house with a laugh like that of an eager, happy child.

"Heavens!" said the owner of the car, "isn't she wonderful!" But neither the prostrate burglars, nor the servants, intent on strapping their wrists together, gave him any answer.

As they were finishing the supper filched from the ice-chest, Fred was brought before them from the kitchen. The blow the burglar had given him was covered with a piece of cold beefsteak, and the water thrown on him to revive him was thawing from his leather breeches. Mr. Carey expressed his gratitude, and rewarded him beyond the avaricious dreams even of a chauffeur.

As the three trespassers left the house, accompanied by many pails of water, the girl turned to the lonely figure in the doorway and waved her hand.

"May we come again?" she called.

But young Mr. Carey did not trust his voice to answer. Standing erect, with folded arms,

in dark silhouette in the light of the hall, he bowed his head.

Deaf to alarm bells, to pistol shots, to cries for help, they found her brother and Ernest Peabody sleeping soundly.

"Sam is a charming chaperon," said the owner of the car.

With the girl beside him, with Fred crouched, shivering, on the step, he threw in the clutch; the servants from the house waved the emptied buckets in salute, and the great car sprang forward into the awakening day toward the golden dome over the Boston Common. In the rear seat Peabody shivered and yawned, and then sat erect.

"Did you get the water?" he demanded, anxiously.

There was a grim silence.

"Yes," said the owner of the car patiently. "You needn't worry any longer. We got the water."

III

THE KIDNAPPERS

During the last two weeks of the "whirlwind" campaign, automobiles had carried the rival candidates to every election district in Greater New York.

During these two weeks, at the disposal of Ernest Peabody—on the Reform ticket "the people's choice for Lieutenant-Governor"—Winthrop had placed his Scarlet Car, and, as its chauffeur, himself.

Not that Winthrop greatly cared for Reform or Ernest Peabody. The "whirlwind" part of the campaign was what attracted him; the crowds, the bands, the fireworks, the rush by night from hall to hall, from Fordham to Tompkinsville. And while, inside the different Lyceums, Peabody lashed the Tammany Tiger, outside, in his car, Winthrop was making friends with Tammany policemen, and his natural enemies, the bicycle cops. To Winthrop, the day in which he did not increase his acquaintance with the traffic squad was a day lost.

But the real reason for his efforts in the cause of Reform was one he could not declare.

And it was a reason that was guessed perhaps by only one person. On some nights Beatrice Forbes and her brother Sam accompanied Peabody. And while Peabody sat in the rear of the car, mumbling the speech he would next deliver, Winthrop was given the chance to to talk with her. These chances were growing cruelly few. In one month after election day Miss Forbes and Peabody would be man and wife. Once before the day of their marriage had been fixed, but, when the Reform Party offered Peabody a high place on its ticket, he asked, in order that he might bear his part in the cause of reform, that the wedding be postponed. To the postponement Miss Forbes made no objection. To one less self-centred than Peabody, it might have appeared that she almost too readily consented.

"I knew I could count upon your seeing my duty as I saw it," said Peabody, much pleased; "it always will be a satisfaction to both of us to remember you never stood between me and my work for reform."

"What do you think my brother-in-law-to-be has done now?" demanded Sam of Winthrop, as the Scarlet Car swept into Jerome Avenue. "He's postponed his marriage with Trix just because he has a chance to be Lieutenant-Governor. What is a Lieutenant-Governor, any-

way, do you know? I don't like to ask Peabody."

"It's not his own election he's working for," said Winthrop. He was conscious of an effort to assume a point of view both noble and magnanimous. "He probably feels the 'cause' calls him. But, good Heavens!"

"Look out!" shrieked Sam; "where are you going?"

Winthrop swung the car back into the avenue.

"To think," he cried, "that a man who could marry—a girl, and then would ask her to wait two months. Or two days! Two months lost out of his life, and she might die; he might lose her; she might change her mind. Any number of men can be Lieutenant-Governors; only one man can be——"

He broke off suddenly, coughed, and fixed his eyes miserably on the road. After a brief pause, Brother Sam covertly looked at him. Could it be that "Billie" Winthrop, the man liked of all men, should love his sister, and that she should prefer Ernest Peabody? He was deeply, loyally indignant. He determined to demand of his sister an immediate and abject apology.

At eight o'clock on the morning of election day, Peabody, in the Scarlet Car, was on his way to vote. He lived at Riverside Drive, and

the polling-booth was only a few blocks distant. During the rest of the day he intended to use the car to visit other election districts, and to keep him in touch with the Reformers at the Gilsey House. Winthrop was acting as his chauffeur, and in the rear seat was Miss Forbes. Peabody had asked her to accompany him to the polling-booth, because he thought women who believed in reform should show their interest in it in public, before all men. Miss Forbes disagreed with him, chiefly because whenever she sat in a box at any of the public meetings the artists from the newspapers, instead of immortalizing the candidate, made pictures of her and her hat. After she had seen her future lord and master cast his vote for reform and himself, he was to depart by train to Tarrytown. The Forbes's country place was there, and for election day her brother Sam had invited out some of his friends to play tennis.

As the car darted and dodged up Eighth Avenue, a man who had been hidden by the stairs to the Elevated, stepped in front of it. It caught him, and hurled him, like a mail-bag tossed from a train, against one of the pillars that support the overhead tracks. Winthrop gave a cry and fell upon the brakes. The cry was as full of pain as though he himself had

been mangled. Miss Forbes saw only the man appear, and then disappear, but Winthrop's shout of warning, and the wrench as the brakes locked, told her what had happened. She shut her eyes, and for an instant covered them with her hands. On the front seat Peabody clutched helplessly at the cushions. In horror his eyes were fastened on the motionless mass jammed against the pillar. Winthrop scrambled over him, and ran to where the man lay. So, apparently, did every other inhabitant of Eighth Avenue; but Winthrop was the first to reach him, and kneeling in the car tracks, he tried to place the head and shoulders of the body against the iron pillar. He had seen very few dead men; and to him, this weight in his arms, this bundle of limp flesh and muddy clothes, and the purple-bloated face with blood trickling down it, looked like a dead man.

Once or twice when in his car Death had reached for Winthrop, and only by the scantiest grace had he escaped. Then the nearness of it had only sobered him. Now that he believed he had brought it to a fellow man, even though he knew he was in no degree to blame, the thought sickened and shocked him. His brain trembled with remorse and horror.

But voices assailing him on every side brought him to the necessity of the moment. Men

were pressing close upon him, jostling, abusing him, shaking fists in his face. Another crowd of men, as though fearing the car would escape of its own volition, were clinging to the steps and running boards.

Winthrop saw Miss Forbes standing above them, talking eagerly to Peabody, and pointing at him. He heard children's shrill voices calling to new arrivals that an automobile had killed a man; that it had killed him on purpose. On the outer edge of the crowd men shouted: "Ah, soak him!" "Kill him!" "Lynch him!"

A soiled giant without a collar stooped over the purple, blood-stained face, and then leaped upright, and shouted: "It's Jerry Gaylor, he's killed old man Gaylor."

The response was instant. Every one seemed to know Jerry Gaylor.

Winthrop took the soiled person by the arm.

"You help me lift him into my car," he ordered. "Take him by the shoulders. We must get him to a hospital."

"To a hospital? To the Morgue!" roared the man. "And the police station for yours. You don't do no get-away."

Winthrop answered him by turning to the crowd. "If this man has any friends here,

they'll please help me put him in my car, and we'll take him to Roosevelt Hospital."

The soiled person shoved a fist and a bad cigar under Winthrop's nose.

"Has he got any friends?" he mocked. "Sure, he's got friends, and they'll fix you, all right."

"Sure!" echoed the crowd.

The man was encouraged.

"Don't you go away thinking you can come up here with your buzz wagon and murder better men nor you'll ever be and——"

"Oh, shut up!" said Winthrop.

He turned his back on the soiled man, and again appealed to the crowd.

"Don't stand there doing nothing," he commanded. "Do you want this man to die? Some of you ring for an ambulance and get a policeman, or tell me where is the nearest drug store."

No one moved, but every one shouted to every one else to do as Winthrop suggested.

Winthrop felt something pulling at his sleeve and, turning, found Peabody at his shoulder, peering fearfully at the figure in the street. He had drawn his cap over his eyes and hidden the lower part of his face in the high collar of his motor coat.

"I can't do anything, can I?" he asked.

"I'm afraid not," whispered Winthrop. "Go back to the car and don't leave Beatrice. I'll attend to this."

"That's what I thought," whispered Peabody eagerly. "I thought she and I had better keep out of it."

"Right!" exclaimed Winthrop. "Go back and get Beatrice away."

Peabody looked his relief, but still hesitated.

"I can't do anything, as you say," he stammered, "and it's sure to get in the 'extras,' and they'll be out in time to lose us thousands of votes, and though no one is to blame, they're sure to blame me. I don't care about myself," he added eagerly, "but the very morning of election—half the city has not voted yet—the ticket——"

"Damn the ticket!" exclaimed Winthrop. "The man's dead!"

Peabody, burying his face still deeper in his collar, backed into the crowd. In the present and past campaigns, from carts and automobiles he had made many speeches in Harlem, and on the West Side lithographs of his stern, resolute features hung in every delicatessen shop, and that he might be recognized was extremely likely.

He whispered to Miss Forbes what he had said, and what Winthrop had said.

"But you *don't* mean to leave him," remarked Miss Forbes.

"I must," returned Peabody. "I can do nothing for the man, and you know how Tammany will use this. They'll have it on the street by ten. They'll say I was driving recklessly; without regard for human life. And, besides, they're waiting for me at headquarters. Please hurry. I am late now."

Miss Forbes gave an exclamation of surprise.

"Why, I'm not going," she said.

"You must go! *I* must go. You can't remain here alone."

Peabody spoke in the quick, assured tone that at the first had convinced Miss Forbes his was a most masterful manner.

"Winthrop, too," he added, "wants you to go away."

Miss Forbes made no reply. But she looked at Peabody inquiringly, steadily, as though she were puzzled as to his identity, as though he had just been introduced to her. It made him uncomfortable.

"Are you coming?" he asked.

Her answer was a question.

"Are you going?"

"I am!" returned Peabody. He added sharply: "I must."

"Good-by," said Miss Forbes.

As he ran up the steps to the station of the Elevated, it seemed to Peabody that the tone of her "good-by" had been most unpleasant. It was severe, disapproving. It had a final, fateful sound. He was conscious of a feeling of self-dissatisfaction. In not seeing the political importance of his not being mixed up with this accident, Winthrop had been peculiarly obtuse, and Beatrice unsympathetic.

Until he had cast his vote for Reform, he felt distinctly ill-used.

For a moment Beatrice Forbes sat in the car motionless, staring unseeingly at the iron steps by which Peabody had disappeared. For a few moments her brows were tightly drawn. Then, having apparently quickly arrived at some conclusion, she opened the door of the car and pushed into the crowd.

Winthrop received her most rudely.

"You mustn't come here!" he cried.

"I thought," she stammered, "you might want some one?"

"I told—" began Winthrop, and then stopped, and added—"to take you away. Where is he?"

Miss Forbes flushed slightly.

"He's gone," she said.

In trying not to look at Winthrop, she saw the fallen figure, motionless against the pillar,

and with an exclamation, bent fearfully toward it.

"Can I do anything?" she asked.

The crowd gave way for her, and with curious pleased faces, closed in again eagerly. She afforded them a new interest.

A young man in the uniform of an ambulance surgeon was kneeling beside the mud-stained figure, and a police officer was standing over both. The ambulance surgeon touched lightly the matted hair from which the blood escaped, stuck his finger in the eye of the prostrate man, and then with his open hand slapped him across the face.

"Oh!" gasped Miss Forbes.

The young doctor heard her, and looking up, scowled reprovingly. Seeing she was a rarely beautiful young woman, he scowled less severely; and then deliberately and expertly, again slapped Mr. Jerry Gaylor on the cheek. He watched the white mark made by his hand upon the purple skin, until the blood struggled slowly back to it, and then rose.

He ignored every one but the police officer.

"There's nothing the matter with *him*," he said. "He's dead drunk."

The words came to Winthrop with such abrupt relief, bearing so tremendous a burden of gratitude, that his heart seemed to fail him.

In his suddenly regained happiness, he unconsciously laughed.

"Are you sure?" he asked eagerly. "I thought I'd killed him."

The surgeon looked at Winthrop coldly.

"When they're like that," he explained with authority, "you can't hurt 'em if you throw them off *The Times* Building."

He condescended to recognize the crowd. "You know where this man lives?"

Voices answered that Mr. Gaylor lived at the corner, over the saloon. The voices showed a lack of sympathy. Old man Gaylor dead was a novelty; old man Gaylor drunk was not.

The doctor's prescription was simple and direct.

"Put him to bed till he sleeps it off," he ordered; he swung himself to the step of the ambulance. "Let him out, Steve," he called. There was the clang of a gong and the rattle of galloping hoofs.

The police officer approached Winthrop. "They tell me Jerry stepped in front of your car; that you wasn't to blame. I'll get their names and where they live. Jerry might try to hold you up for damages."

"Thank you very much," said Winthrop.

With several of Jerry's friends, and the soiled person, who now seemed dissatisfied that Jerry

was alive, Winthrop helped to carry him up one flight of stairs and drop him upon a bed.

"In case he needs anything," said Winthrop, and gave several bills to the soiled person, upon whom immediately Gaylor's other friends closed in. "And I'll send my own doctor at once to attend to him."

"You'd better," said the soiled person morosely, "or he'll try to shake you down."

The opinions as to what might be Mr. Gaylor's next move seemed unanimous.

From the saloon below, Winthrop telephoned to the family doctor, and then rejoined Miss Forbes and the police officer. The officer gave him the names of those citizens who had witnessed the accident, and in return received Winthrop's card.

"Not that it will go any further," said the officer reassuringly. "They're all saying you acted all right and wanted to take him to Roosevelt. There's many," he added with sententious indignation, "that knock a man down, and then run away without waiting to find out if they've hurted 'em or killed 'em."

The speech for both Winthrop and Miss Forbes was equally embarrassing.

"You don't say?" exclaimed Winthrop nervously. He shook the policeman's hand. The handclasp was apparently satisfactory to that

official, for he murmured, "Thank you," and stuck something in the lining of his helmet. "Now, then!" Winthrop said briskly to Miss Forbes, "I think we have done all we can. And we'll get away from this place a little faster than the law allows."

Miss Forbes had seated herself in the car, and Winthrop was cranking up, when the same policeman, wearing an anxious countenance, touched him on the arm. "There is a gentleman here," he said, "wants to speak to you." He placed himself between the gentleman and Winthrop and whispered: "He's 'Izzy' Schwab, he's a Harlem police-court lawyer and a Tammany man. He's after something, look out for him."

Winthrop saw, smiling at him ingratiatingly, a slight, slim youth, with beady, rat-like eyes, a low forehead, and a Hebraic nose. He wondered how it had been possible for Jerry Gaylor to so quickly secure counsel. But Mr. Schwab at once undeceived him.

"I'm from *The Journal*," he began, "not regular on the staff, but I send 'em Harlem items, and the court reporter treats me nice, see! Now about this accident; could you give me the name of the young lady?"

He smiled encouragingly at Miss Forbes.

"I could not!" growled Winthrop. "The

man wasn't hurt, the policeman will tell you so. It is not of the least public interest."

With a deprecatory shrug, the young man smiled knowingly.

"Well, mebbe not the lady's name," he granted, "but the name of the *other* gentleman who was with you, when the accident occurred." His black, rat-like eyes snapped. "I think *his* name would be of public interest."

To gain time Winthrop stepped into the driver's seat. He looked at Mr. Schwab steadily.

"There was no other gentleman," he said. "Do you mean my chauffeur?" Mr. Schwab gave an appreciative chuckle.

"No, I don't mean your chauffeur," he mimicked. "I mean," he declared theatrically in his best police-court manner, "the man who to-day is hoping to beat Tammany, Ernest Peabody!"

Winthrop stared at the youth insolently.

"I don't understand you," he said.

"Oh, of course not!" jeered "Izzy" Schwab. He moved excitedly from foot to foot. "Then who *was* the other man," he demanded, "the man who ran away?"

Winthrop felt the blood rise to his face. That Miss Forbes should hear this rat of a man sneering at the one she was to marry,

made him hate Peabody. But he answered easily:

"No one ran away. I told my chauffeur to go and call up an ambulance. That was the man you saw."

As when "leading on" a witness to commit himself, Mr. Schwab smiled sympathetically.

"And he hasn't got back yet," he purred, "has he?"

"No, and I'm not going to wait for him," returned Winthrop. He reached for the clutch, but Mr. Schwab jumped directly in front of the car.

"Was he looking for a telephone when he ran up the Elevated steps?" he cried.

He shook his fists vehemently.

"Oh, no, Mr. Winthrop, it won't do—you make a good witness. I wouldn't ask for no better, but, you don't fool 'Izzy' Schwab."

"You're mistaken, I tell you," cried Winthrop desperately. "He may look like—like this man you speak of, but no Peabody was in this car."

"Izzy" Schwab wrung his hands hysterically.

"No, he wasn't!" he cried, "because he run away! And left an old man in the street—dead, for all he knowed—nor cared neither. Yah!" shrieked the Tammany heeler. "*Him* a Reformer, yah!"

"Stand away from my car," shouted Winthrop, "or you'll get hurt."

"Yah, you'd like to, wouldn't you?" returned Mr. Schwab, leaping nimbly to one side. "What do you think *The Journal* 'll give me for that story, hey? 'Ernest Peabody, the Reformer, Kills an Old Man, AND RUNS AWAY.' And hiding his face, too! I seen him. What do you think that story's worth to Tammany, hey? It's worth twenty thousand votes!" The young man danced in front of the car triumphantly, mockingly, in a frenzy of malice. "Read the extras, that's all," he taunted. "Read 'em in an hour from now!"

Winthrop glared at the shrieking figure with fierce, impotent rage; then, with a look of disgust, he flung the robe off his knees and rose. Mr. Schwab, fearing bodily injury, backed precipitately behind the policeman.

"Come here," commanded Winthrop softly. Mr. Schwab warily approached. "That story," said Winthrop, dropping his voice to a low whisper, "is worth a damn sight more to you than twenty thousand votes. You take a spin with me up Riverside Drive where we can talk. Maybe you and I can 'make a little business.'"

At the words, the face of Mr. Schwab first darkened angrily, and then lit with such exultation that it appeared as though Winthrop's

efforts had only placed Peabody deeper in Mr. Schwab's power. But the rat-like eyes wavered, there was doubt in them, and greed, and, when they turned to observe if any one could have heard the offer, Winthrop felt the trick was his. It was apparent that Mr. Schwab was willing to arbitrate.

He stepped gingerly into the front seat, and as Winthrop leaned over him and tucked and buckled the fur robe around his knees, he could not resist a glance at his friends on the sidewalk. They were grinning with wonder and envy, and as the great car shook itself, and ran easily forward, Mr. Schwab leaned back and carelessly waved his hand. But his mind did not waver from the purpose of his ride. He was not one to be cajoled with fur rugs and glittering brass.

"Well, Mr. Winthrop," he began briskly. "You want to say something? You must be quick—every minute's money."

"Wait till we're out of the traffic," begged Winthrop anxiously, "I don't want to run down any more old men, and I wouldn't for the world have anything happen to you, Mr.—" He paused politely.

"Schwab—Isadore Schwab."

"How did you know *my* name?" asked Winthrop.

"The card you gave the police officer."

"I see," said Winthrop. They were silent while the car swept swiftly west, and Mr. Schwab kept thinking that for a young man who was afraid of the traffic, Winthrop was dodging the motor cars, beer vans, and iron pillars, with a dexterity that was criminally reckless.

At that hour Riverside Drive was empty, and after a gasp of relief, Mr. Schwab resumed the attack.

"Now, then," he said sharply, "don't go any further. What is this you want to talk about!"

"How much will *The Journal* give you for this story of yours?" asked Winthrop.

Mr. Schwab smiled mysteriously.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because," said Winthrop, "I think I could offer you something better."

"You mean," said the police-court lawyer cautiously, "you will make it worth my while not to tell the truth about what I saw?"

"Exactly," said Winthrop.

"That's all! Stop the car," cried Mr. Schwab. His manner was commanding. It vibrated with triumph. His eyes glistened with wicked satisfaction.

"Stop the car?" demanded Winthrop, "what do you mean?"

"I mean," said Mr. Schwab dramatically, "that I've got you where I want you, thank you. You have killed Peabody dead as a cigar butt! Now I can tell them how his friends tried to bribe me. Why do you think I came in your car? For what money *you* got? Do you think you can stack up your roll against the *New York Journal's*, or against Tammany's?" His shrill voice rose exultantly. "Why, Tammany ought to make me judge for this! Now, let me down here," he commanded, "and next time, don't think you can take on 'Izzy' Schwab and get away with it."

They were passing Grant's Tomb, and the car was moving at a speed that Mr. Schwab recognized was in excess of the speed limit.

"Do you hear me?" he demanded, "let me down!"

To his dismay Winthrop's answer was in some fashion to so juggle with the shining brass rods that the car flew into greater speed. To "Izzy" Schwab it seemed to scorn the earth, to proceed by leaps and jumps. But, what added even more to his mental discomfiture was that Winthrop should turn and slowly and familiarly wink at him.

As through the window of an express train, Mr. Schwab saw the white front of Claremont, and beyond it the broad sweep of the Hudson.

And then, without decreasing its speed, the car like a great bird swept down a hill, shot under a bridge, and into a partly paved street. Mr. Schwab already was two miles from his own bailiwick. His surroundings were unfamiliar. On the one hand were newly erected, untenanted flat houses with the paint still on the window panes, and on the other side, detached villas, a roadhouse, an orphan asylum, a glimpse of the Hudson.

"Let me out," yelled Mr. Schwab, "what you trying to do? Do you think a few blocks'll make any difference to a telephone? You think you're damned smart, don't you? But you won't feel so fresh when I get on the long distance. You let me down," he threatened, "or, I'll——"

With a sickening skidding of wheels, Winthrop whirled the car round a corner and into the Lafayette Boulevard, that for miles runs along the cliff of the Hudson.

"Yes," asked Winthrop, "*what* will you do?"

On one side was a high, steep bank, on the other many trees, and through them below, the river. But there were no houses, and at half-past eight in the morning those who later drive upon the boulevard were still in bed.

"*What* will you do?" repeated Winthrop.

Miss Forbes, apparently as much interested

in Mr. Schwab's answer as Winthrop, leaned forward. Winthrop raised his voice above the whir of flying wheels, the rushing wind, and scattering pebbles.

"I asked you into this car," he shouted, "because I meant to keep you in it until I had you where you couldn't do any mischief. I told you I'd give you something better than *The Journal* would give you, and I am going to give you a happy day in the country. We're now on our way to this lady's house. You are my guest, and you can play golf, and bridge, and the piano, and eat and drink until the polls close, and after that you can go to the devil. If you jump out at this speed, you will break your neck. And if I have to slow up for anything, and you try to get away, I'll go after you—it doesn't matter where it is—and break every bone in your body."

"Yah! you can't!" shrieked Mr. Schwab. "You can't do it!" The madness of the flying engines had got upon his nerves. Their poison was surging in his veins. He knew he had only to touch his elbow against the elbow of Winthrop, and he could throw the three of them into eternity. He was travelling on air, uplifted, defiant, carried beyond himself.

"I can't do what?" asked Winthrop.

The words reached Schwab from an immea-

surable distance, as from another planet, a calm, humdrum planet on which events moved in commonplace, orderly array. Without a jar, with no transition stage, instead of hurtling through space, Mr. Schwab found himself luxuriously seated in a cushioned chair, motionless, at the side of a steep bank. For a mile before him stretched an empty road. And beside him in the car, with arms folded calmly on the wheel, there glared at him a grim, alert young man.

"I can't do what?" growled the young man.

A feeling of great loneliness fell upon "Izzy" Schwab. Where were now those officers, who in the police courts were at his beck and call? Where the numbered houses, the passing surface cars, the sweating multitudes of Eighth Avenue? In all the world he was alone, alone on an empty country road, with a grim, alert young man.

"When I asked you how you knew my name," said the young man, "I thought you knew me as having won some races in Florida last winter. This is the car that won. I thought maybe you might have heard of me when I was captain of a foot-ball team at—a university. If you have any idea that you can jump from this car and not be killed, or that I cannot pound you into a pulp, let me prove to

you you're wrong—now. We're quite alone. Do you wish to get down?"

"No," shrieked Schwab, "I won't!" He turned appealingly to the young lady. "You're a witness," he cried. "If he assaults me, he's liable. I haven't done nothing."

"We're near Yonkers," said the young man, "and if you try to take advantage of my having to go slow through the town, you know now what will happen to you."

Mr. Schwab having instantly planned, on reaching Yonkers, to leap from the car into the arms of the village constable, with suspicious alacrity assented. The young man regarded him doubtfully.

"I'm afraid I'll have to show you," said the young man. He laid two fingers on Mr. Schwab's wrist; looking at him, as he did so, steadily and thoughtfully, like a physician feeling a pulse. Mr. Schwab screamed. When he had seen policemen twist steel nippers on the wrists of prisoners, he had thought, when the prisoners shrieked and writhed, they were acting. He now knew they were not.

"Now, will you promise?" demanded the grim young man.

"Yes," gasped Mr. Schwab. "I'll sit still. I won't do nothing."

"Good," muttered Winthrop.

A troubled voice that carried to the heart of Schwab a promise of protection, said: "Mr. Schwab, would you be more comfortable back here with me?"

Mr. Schwab turned two terrified eyes in the direction of the voice. He saw the beautiful young lady regarding him kindly, compassionately; with just a suspicion of a smile. Mr. Schwab instantly scrambled to safety over the front seat into the body of the car. Miss Forbes made way for the prisoner beside her and he sank back with a nervous, apologetic sigh. The alert young man was quick to follow the lead of the lady.

"You'll find caps and goggles in the boot, Schwab," he said hospitably. "You had better put them on. We are going rather fast now." He extended a magnificent case of pigskin, that bloomed with fat black cigars. "Try one of these," said the hospitable young man. The emotions that swept Mr. Schwab he found difficult to pursue, but he raised his hat to the lady. "May I, miss?" he said.

"Certainly," said the lady.

There was a moment of delay while with fingers that slightly trembled, Mr. Schwab selected an amazing green cap and lit his cigar; and then the car swept forward, singing and humming happily, and scattering the autumn

leaves. The young lady leaned toward him with a book in a leather cover. She placed her finger on a twisting red line that trickled through a page of type.

"We're just here," said the young lady, "and we ought to reach home, which is just about there, in an hour."

"I see," said Schwab. But all he saw was a finger in a white glove, and long eyelashes entangled in a gray veil.

For many minutes or, for all Schwab knew, for many miles, the young lady pointed out to him the places along the Hudson, of which he had read in the public school history, and quaint old manor houses set in glorious lawns; and told him who lived in them. Schwab knew the names as belonging to down-town streets, and up-town clubs. He became nervously humble, intensely polite, he felt he was being carried as an honored guest into the very heart of the Four Hundred, and when the car jogged slowly down the main street of Yonkers, although a policeman stood idly within a yard of him, instead of shrieking to him for help, "Izzy" Schwab looked at him scornfully across the social gulf that separated them, with all the intolerance he believed becoming in the upper classes.

"Those bicycle cops," he said confidentially to Miss Forbes, "are too chesty."

The car turned in between stone pillars, and under an arch of red and golden leaves, and swept up a long avenue to a house of innumerable roofs. It was the grandest house Mr. Schwab had ever entered, and when two young men in striped waistcoats and many brass buttons ran down the stone steps and threw open the door of the car, his heart fluttered between fear and pleasure.

Lounging before an open fire in the hall were a number of young men, who welcomed Winthrop delightedly, and to all of whom Mr. Schwab was formally presented. As he was introduced he held each by the hand and elbow and said impressively, and much to the other's embarrassment, "*What* name, please?"

Then one of the servants conducted him to a room opening on the hall, from whence he heard stifled exclamations and laughter, and some one saying "Hush." But "Izzy" Schwab did not care. The slave in brass buttons was proffering him ivory-backed hair-brushes, and obsequiously removing the dust from his coat collar. Mr. Schwab explained to him that he was not dressed for automobiling, as Mr. Winthrop had invited him quite informally. The man was most charmingly sympathetic. And when he returned to the hall every one received him with the most genial, friendly interest.

Would he play golf, or tennis, or pool, or walk over the farm, or just look on? It seemed the wish of each to be his escort. Never had he been so popular.

He said he would "just look on." And so, during the last and decisive day of the "whirlwind" campaign, while in Eighth Avenue voters were being challenged, beaten, and bribed, bonfires were burning, and "extras" were appearing every half-hour, "Izzy" Schwab, the Tammany henchman, with a secret worth twenty thousand votes, sat a prisoner, in a wicker chair, with a drink and a cigar, guarded by four young men in flannels, who played tennis violently at five dollars a corner.

It was always a great day in the life of "Izzy" Schwab. After a luncheon, which, as he later informed his friends, could not have cost less than "two dollars a plate and drink all you like," Sam Forbes took him on at pool. Mr. Schwab had learned the game in the cellars of Eighth Avenue at two and a half cents a cue, and now, even in Columbus Circle he was a star. So, before the sun had set Mr. Forbes, who at pool rather fancied himself, was seventy-five dollars poorer, and Mr. Schwab just that much to the good. Then there followed a strange ceremony called tea, or, if you preferred it, whiskey and soda; and the tall foot-

man bent before him with huge silver salvers laden down with flickering silver lamps, and bubbling soda bottles, and cigars, and cigarettes.

"You could have filled your pockets with twenty-five cent Havanas, and nobody would have said nothing!" declared Mr. Schwab, and his friends, who never had enjoyed his chance to study at such close quarters the truly rich, nodded enviously.

At six o'clock Mr. Schwab led Winthrop into the big library and asked for his ticket of leave.

"They'll be counting the votes soon," he begged. "I can't do no harm now, and I don't mean to. I didn't see nothing, and I won't say nothing. But it's election night, and—and I just *got* to be on Broadway."

"Right," said Winthrop, "I'll have a car take you in, and if you will accept this small check——"

"No!" roared "Izzy" Schwab. Afterward he wondered how he came to do it. "You've give me a good time, Mr. Winthrop. You've treated me fine, all the gentlemen have treated me nice. I'm not a blackmailer, Mr. Winthrop." Mr. Schwab's voice shook slightly.

"Nonsense, Schwab, you didn't let me finish," said Winthrop, "I'm likely to need a lawyer any time; this is a retaining fee. Suppose

It was always a great day in the life of "Izzy" Schwab.

I exceed the speed limit—I'm liable to do that——"

"You bet you are!" exclaimed Mr. Schwab violently.

"Well, then, I'll send for *you*, and there isn't a police magistrate, nor any of the traffic squad, you can't handle, is there?"

Mr. Schwab flushed with pleasure.

"You can count on me," he vowed, "and your friends, tôo, and the ladies," he added gallantly. "If ever the ladies want to get bail, tell 'em to telephone for 'Izzy' Schwab. Of course," he said reluctantly, "if it's a retaining fee——"

But when he read the face of the check he exclaimed in protest: "But, Mr. Winthrop, this is more than *The Journal* would have give me!"

They put him in a car belonging to one of the other men, and all came out on the steps to wave him "good-by," and he drove magnificently into his own district, where there were over a dozen men who swore he tipped the French chauffeur a five-dollar bill "just like it was a cigarette."

All of election day since her arrival in Winthrop's car Miss Forbes had kept to herself. In the morning, when the other young people were out of doors, she remained in her room, and after luncheon, when they gathered round the

billiard table, she sent for her cart and drove off alone. The others thought she was concerned over the possible result of the election, and did not want to disturb them by her anxiety. Winthrop, thinking the presence of Schwab embarrassed her, recalling as it did Peabody's unfortunate conduct of the morning, blamed himself for bringing Schwab to the house. But he need not have distressed himself. Miss Forbes was thinking neither of Schwab nor Peabody, nor was she worried or embarrassed. On the contrary, she was completely happy.

When that morning she had seen Peabody running up the steps of the Elevated, all the doubts, the troubles, questions, and misgivings that night and day for the last three months had upset her, fell from her shoulders like the pilgrim's heavy pack. For months she had been telling herself that the unrest she felt when with Peabody was due to her not being able to appreciate the importance of those big affairs in which he was so interested; in which he was so admirable a figure. She had, as she supposed, loved him, because he was earnest, masterful, intent of purpose. His had seemed a fine character. When she had compared him with the amusing boys of her own age, the easy-going joking youths to whom the betterment of New York was of no concern, she had been

proud in her choice. She was glad Peabody was ambitious. She was ambitious for him. She was glad to have him consult her on those questions of local government, to listen to his fierce, contemptuous abuse of Tammany. And yet early in their engagement she had missed something, something she had never known, but which she felt sure should exist. Whether she had seen it in the lives of others, or read of it in romances, or whether it was there because it was nature to desire to be loved, she did not know. But long before Winthrop returned from his trip round the world, in her meetings with the man she was to marry, she had begun to find that there was something lacking. And Winthrop had shown her that this something lacking was the one thing needful. When Winthrop had gone abroad he was only one of her brother's several charming friends. One of the amusing, merry youths who came and went in the house as freely as Sam himself. Now, after two years' absence, he refused to be placed in that category.

He rebelled on the first night of his return. As she came down to the dinner of welcome her brother was giving Winthrop, he stared at her as though she were a ghost, and said, so solemnly that every one in the room, even Peabody, smiled: "Now I know why I came home." That he refused to recognize her engagement to

Peabody, that on every occasion he told her, or by some act showed her, he loved her; that he swore she should never marry any one but himself, and that he would never marry any one but her, did not at first, except to annoy, in any way impress her.

But he showed her what in her intercourse with Peabody was lacking. At first she wished Peabody could find time to be as fond of her, as foolishly fond of her, as was Winthrop. But she realized that this was unreasonable. Winthrop was just a hot-headed, impressionable boy, Peabody was a man doing a man's work. And then she found that week after week she became more difficult to please. Other things in which she wished Peabody might be more like Winthrop, obtruded themselves. Little things which she was ashamed to notice, but which rankled; and big things, such as consideration for others, and a sense of humor, and not talking of himself. Since this campaign began, at times she had felt that if Peabody said "I" once again, she must scream. She assured herself she was as yet unworthy of him, that her intelligence was weak, that as she grew older and so better able to understand serious affairs, such as the importance of having an honest man at Albany as Lieutenant-Governor, they would become more in sympathy. And

now, at a stroke, the whole fabric of self-deception fell from her. It was not that she saw Peabody so differently, but that she saw herself and her own heart, and where it lay. And she knew that "Billy" Winthrop, gentle, joking, selfish only in his love for her, held it in his two strong hands.

For the moment, when as she sat in the car deserted by Peabody this truth flashed upon her, she forgot the man lying injured in the street, the unscrubbed mob crowding about her. She was conscious only that a great weight had been lifted. That her blood was flowing again, leaping, beating, dancing through her body. It seemed as though she could not too quickly tell Winthrop. For both of them she had lost out of their lives many days. She had risked losing him for always. Her only thought was to make up to him and to herself the wasted time. But throughout the day the one-time welcome, but now intruding, friends and the innumerable conventions of hospitality required her to smile and show an interest, when her heart and mind were crying out the one great fact.

It was after dinner, and the members of the house party were scattered between the billiard-room and the piano. Sam Forbes returned from the telephone.

"Tammany," he announced, "concedes the election of Jerome by forty thousand votes and that he carries his ticket with him. Ernest Peabody is elected his Lieutenant-Governor by a thousand votes. Ernest," he added, "seems to have had a close call." There was a tremendous chorus of congratulations in the cause of Reform. They drank the health of Peabody. Peabody himself, on the telephone, informed Sam Forbes that a conference of the leaders would prevent his being present with them that evening. The enthusiasm for Reform perceptibly increased.

An hour later Winthrop came over to Beatrice and held out his hand. "I'm going to slip away," he said. "Good-night."

"Going away!" exclaimed Beatrice.

Her voice showed such apparently acute concern that Winthrop wondered how the best of women could be so deceitful, even to be polite.

"I promised some men," he stammered, "to drive them down-town to see the crowds."

Beatrice shook her head.

"It's far too late for that," she said. "Tell me the real reason."

Winthrop turned away his eyes.

"Oh! the real reason," he said gravely, "is the same old reason, the one I'm not allowed to talk about. It's cruelly hard when I don't

see you," he went on, slowly dragging out the words, "but it's harder when I do; so I'm going to say 'good-night' and run into town."

He stood for a moment staring moodily at the floor, and then dropped into a chair beside her.

"And, I believe, I've not told you," he went on, "that on Wednesday I'm running away for good, that is, for a year or two. I've made all the fight I can and I lose, and there is no use in my staying on here to—well—to suffer, that is the plain English of it. So," he continued briskly, "I won't be here for the ceremony, and this is 'good-by' as well as 'good-night.'"

"Where are you going for a year?" asked Miss Forbes.

Her voice now showed no concern. It even sounded as though she did not take his news seriously, as though as to his movements she was possessed of a knowledge superior to his own. He tried to speak in matter-of-fact tones.

"To Uganda!" he said.

"To Uganda?" repeated Miss Forbes. "Where is Uganda?"

"It is in East Africa; I had bad luck there last trip, but now I know the country better, and I ought to get some good shooting."

Miss Forbes appeared indifferently incredulous. In her eyes there was a look of radiant

happiness. It rendered them bewilderingly beautiful.

"On Wednesday," she said. "Won't you come and see us again before you sail for Uganda?"

Winthrop hesitated.

"I'll stop in and say 'good-by' to your mother if she's in town, and to thank her. She's been awfully good to me. But you—I really would rather not see you again. You understand, or rather, you don't understand, and," he added vehemently, "you never will understand." He stood looking down at her miserably.

On the driveway outside there was a crunching on the gravel of heavy wheels and an aurora-borealis of lights.

"There's your car," said Miss Forbes. "I'll go out and see you off."

"You're very good," muttered Winthrop. He could not understand. This parting from her was the great moment in his life, and although she must know that, she seemed to be making it unnecessarily hard for him. He had told her he was going to a place very far away, to be gone a long time, and she spoke of saying "good-by" to him as pleasantly as though it was his intention to return from Uganda for breakfast.

Instead of walking through the hall where the others were gathered, she led him out through one of the French windows upon the terrace, and along it to the steps. When she saw the chauffeur standing by the car, she stopped.

"I thought you were going alone," she said.

"I am," answered Winthrop. "It's not Fred; that's Sam's chauffeur; he only brought the car around."

The man handed Winthrop his coat and cap, and left them, and Winthrop seated himself at the wheel. She stood above him on the top step. In the evening gown of lace and silver she looked a part of the moonlight night. For each of them the moment had arrived. Like a swimmer standing on the bank gathering courage for the plunge, Miss Forbes gave a trembling, shivering sigh.

"You're cold," said Winthrop, gently. "You must go in. Good-by."

"It isn't that," said the girl. "Have you an extra coat?"

"It isn't cold enough for——"

"I meant for me," stammered the girl in a frightened voice. "I thought perhaps you would take me a little way, and bring me back."

At first the young man did not answer, but sat staring in front of him, then, he said simply:

"It's awfully good of you, Beatrice. I won't forget it."

It was a wonderful autumn night, moonlight, cold, clear and brilliant. She stepped in beside him and wrapped herself in one of his great-coats. They started swiftly down the avenue of trees.

"No, not fast," begged the girl, "I want to talk to you."

The car checked and rolled forward smoothly, sometimes in deep shadow, sometimes in the soft silver glamour of the moon; beneath them the fallen leaves crackled and rustled under the slow-moving wheels. At the highway Winthrop hesitated. It lay before them arched with great and ancient elms; below, the Hudson glittered and rippled in the moonlight.

"Which way do you want to go?" said Winthrop.

His voice was very grateful, very humble.

The girl did not answer.

There was a long, long pause.

Then he turned and looked at her and saw her smiling on him with that light in her eyes that never was on land or sea.

"To Uganda," said the girl.

PLAYING DEAD

PLAYING DEAD

To Fate, "Jimmie" Blagwin had signalled the "supreme gesture." He had accomplished the Great Adventure. He was dead.

And as he sat on his trunk in the tiny hall bedroom, and in the afternoon papers read of his suicide, his eyes were lit with pleasurable pride. Not at the nice things the obituaries told of his past, but because his act of self-sacrifice, so carefully considered, had been carried to success. As he read Jimmie smiled with self-congratulation. He felt glad he was alive; or, to express it differently, felt glad he was dead. And he hoped Jeanne, his late wife, now his widow, also would be glad. But not *too* glad. In return for relieving Jeanne of his presence he hoped she might at times remember him with kindness. Of her always would he think gratefully and tenderly. Nothing could end his love for Jeanne—not even this suicide.

As children, in winter in New York, in summer on Long Island, Jimmie Blagwin and Jeanne Thayer had grown up together. They had the

same tastes in sports, the same friends, the same worldly advantages. Neither of them had many ideas. It was after they married that Jeanne began to borrow ideas and doubt the advantages.

For the first three years after the wedding, in the old farmhouse which Jimmie had made over into a sort of idealized country club, Jeanne lived a happy, healthy, out-of-door existence. To occupy her there were Jimmie's hunters and a pack of joyous beagles; for tennis, at week-ends Jimmie filled the house with men, and during the week they both played polo, he with the Meadow Brooks and she with the Meadow Larks, and the golf links of Piping Rock ran almost to their lodge-gate. Until Proctor Maddox took a cottage at Glen Cove and joined the golf-club, than Jeanne and Jimmie on all Long Island no couple were so content.

At that time Proctor Maddox was the young and brilliant editor of the *Wilderness* magazine, the wilderness being the world we live in, and the Voice crying in it the voice of Proctor Maddox. He was a Socialist and Feminist, he flirted with syndicalism, and he had a good word even for the I. W. W. He was darkly handsome, his eye-glasses were fastened to a black ribbon, and he addressed his hostess as "dear lady." He was that sort. Women de-

scribed him as "dangerous," and liked him because he talked of things they did not understand, and because he told each of them it was easy to see it would be useless to flatter *her*. The men did not like him. The oldest and wealthiest members of the club protested that the things Maddox said in his magazine should exclude him from the society of law-abiding, money-making millionaires. But Freddy Bayliss, the leader of the younger crowd, said that, to him, it did not matter what Maddox said in the *Wilderness*, so long as he stayed there. It was Bayliss who christened him "the Voice."

Until the Voice came to Glen Cove all that troubled Jeanne was that her pony had sprained a tendon, and that in the mixed doubles her eye was off the ball. Proctor Maddox suggested other causes for discontent.

"What does it matter," he demanded, "whether you hit a rubber ball inside a whitewashed line, or not? That energy, that brain, that influence of yours over others, that something men call—charm, should be exerted to emancipate yourself and your unfortunate sisters."

"Emaciate myself," protested Jeanne eagerly; "do you mean I'm taking on flesh?"

"I said 'emancipate,'" corrected Maddox. "I mean to free yourself of the bonds that bind your sex; for instance, the bonds of matrimony.

It is obsolete, barbarous. It makes of women—slaves and chattels."

"But, since I married, I'm *much* freer," protested Jeanne. "Mother never let me play polo, or ride astride. But Jimmie lets me. He says cross saddle is safer."

"Jimmie *lets* you!" mocked the Voice. "*That* is exactly what I mean. Why should you go to him, or to any man, for permission? Are you his cook asking for an evening out? No! You are a free soul, and your duty is to keep your soul from bondage. There are others in the world besides your husband. What of your duty to them? Have you ever thought of them?"

"No, I have not," confessed Jeanne. "Who do you mean by 'them'? Shop-girls, and white slaves, and women who want to vote?"

"I mean the great army of the discontented," explained the Voice.

"And should I be discontented?" asked Jeanne. "Tell me why."

So, then and on many other occasions, Maddox told her why. It was one of the best things he did.

People say, when the triangle forms, the husband always is the last to see. But, if he loves his wife, he is the first. And after three years of being married to Jeanne, and, before that,

five years of wanting to marry Jeanne, Jimmie loved her devotedly, entirely, slavishly. It was the best thing *he* did. So, when to Jeanne the change came, her husband recognized it. What the cause was he could not fathom; he saw only that, in spite of her impatient denials, she was discontented, restless, unhappy. Thinking it might be that for too long they had gone "back to the land," he suggested they might repeat their honeymoon in Paris. The idea was received only with alarm. Concerning Jeanne, Jimmie decided secretly to consult a doctor. Meanwhile he bought her a new hunter.

The awakening came one night at a dance at the country club. That evening Jeanne was filled with unrest, and with Jimmie seemed particularly aggrieved. Whatever he said gave offense; even his eagerness to conciliate her was too obvious. With the other men who did not dance, Jimmie was standing in the doorway when, over the heads of those looking in from the veranda, he saw the white face and black eyes of Maddox. Jimmie knew Maddox did not dance, at those who danced had heard him jeer, and his presence caused him mild surprise. The editor, leaning forward, unconscious that he was conspicuous, searched the ballroom with his eyes. They were anxious, unsatisfied; they gave to his pale face the look of one who is

famished. Then suddenly his face lit and he nodded eagerly. Following the direction of his eyes, Jimmie saw his wife, over the shoulder of her partner, smiling at Maddox. Her face was radiant; a great peace had descended upon it.

Jimmie knew just as surely as though Jeanne had told him. He walked out and sat down on the low wall of the terrace with his back to the club-house and his legs dangling. Below him in the moonlight lay the great basin of the golf links, the white rectangle of the polo fields with the gallows-like goals, and on a hill opposite, above the tree-tops, the chimneys of his house. He was down for a tennis match the next morning, and the sight of his home suggested to him only that he ought to be in bed and asleep.

Then he recognized that he never would sleep again. He went over it from the beginning, putting the pieces together. He never had liked Maddox, but he had explained that by the fact that, as Maddox was so much more intelligent than he, there could be little between them. And it was because every one said he was so intelligent that he had looked upon his devotion to Jeanne rather as a compliment. He wondered why already it had not been plain to him. When Jeanne, who mocked at golf as a refuge for old age, spent hours with Maddox on the links; when, after she had de-

clined to ride with her husband, on his return he would find her at tea with Maddox in front of the wood fire.

That night, when he drove Jeanne home, she still was joyous, radiant; it was now she who chided him upon being silent.

He waited until noon the next morning and then asked her if it were true. It was true. Jeanne thanked him for coming to her so honestly and straightforwardly. She also had been straightforward and honest. They had waited, she said, not through deceit but only out of consideration for him.

"Before we told you," Jeanne explained, "we wanted to be quite sure that *I* was sure."

The "we" hurt Jimmie like the stab of a rusty knife.

But he said only: "And you *are* sure? Three years ago you were sure you loved *me*."

Jeanne's eyes were filled with pity, but she said: "That was three years ago. I was a child, and now I am a woman. In many ways you have stood still and I have gone on."

"That's true," said Jimmie; "you always were too good for me."

"*No* woman is good enough for you," returned Jeanne loyally. "And your brains are just as good as mine, only you haven't used them. I have questioned and reached out and

gained knowledge of all kinds. I am a Feminist and you are not. If you were you would understand."

"I don't know even what a Feminist is," said Jimmie, "but I'm glad I'm not one."

"A Feminist is one," explained Jeanne, "who does not think her life should be devoted to one person, but to the world."

Jimmie shook his head and smiled miserably.

"*You* are *my* world," he said. "The only world I know. The only world I want to know."

He walked to the fireplace and leaned his elbows on the mantel, and buried his head in his hands. But that his distress might not hurt Jeanne, he turned and, to give her courage, smiled.

"If you are going to devote yourself to the world," he asked, "and not to any one person, why can't I sort of trail along? Why need you leave me and go with—with some one else?"

"For the work I hope to do," answered Jeanne, "you and I are not suited. But Proctor and I are suited. He says he never met a woman who understands him as I do."

"Hell!" said Jimmie. After that he did not speak for some time. Then he asked roughly:

"He's going to marry you, of course?"

Jeanne flushed crimson.

"Of course!" she retorted. Her blush looked like indignation, and so Jimmie construed it, but it was the blush of embarrassment. For Maddox considered the ceremony of marriage an ignoble and barbaric bond. It degraded the woman, he declared, in making her a slave, and the man in that he accepted such a sacrifice. Jeanne had not argued with him. Until she were free, to discuss it with him seemed indecent. But in her own mind there was no doubt. If she were to be the helpmate of Proctor Maddox in uplifting the world, she would be Mrs. Proctor Maddox; or, much as he was to her, each would uplift the world alone. But she did not see the necessity of explaining all this to Jimmie, so she said: "Of course!"

"I will see the lawyers to-morrow," said Jimmie. "It will take some time to arrange, and so," he added hopefully, "you can think it over."

Jeanne exclaimed miserably:

"I have thought of nothing else," she cried, "for six months!"

Jimmie bent above her and laid his hand upon her shoulder.

"I am sorry, so sorry," he said. "If I'd any brains I'd have seen how it was long ago.

Now I'll not waste time. You'll be rid of me as quick as the courts can fix it."

He started for the door, but Jeanne caught his hand.

"Won't you kiss me, Jimmie?" she said.

Jimmie hesitated unhappily and Jeanne raised her eyes to his.

"Not since we were married, Jimmie," she said, "has any one kissed me but you."

So Jimmie bent and kissed her. She clung to his sleeve.

"Jimmie," she begged, "you haven't told me you forgive me. Unless you forgive me I can't go on with it. Tell me you forgive me!"

"Forgive you?" protested Jimmie. "I love you!"

When Jimmie went to the office of the lawyer, who also was his best friend, and told him that Jeanne wanted a separation, that young man kicked the waste-paper basket against the opposite wall.

"I'll not do it," he protested, "and I won't let you do it, either. Why should you smear your name and roll in the dirt and play dead to please Jeanne? If Jeanne thinks I'm going to send you to a Raines hotel and follow you up with detectives to furnish her with a fake divorce, you can tell her I won't. What are they coming to?" demanded the best friend.

"What do they want? A man gives a woman all his love, all his thoughts, gives her his name, his home; only asks to work his brains out for her, only asks to see her happy. And she calls it 'charity,' calls herself a 'slave'!" The best friend kicked violently at the place where the waste-basket had been. "*Give* them the vote, I say," he shouted. "It's all they're good for!"

The violence of his friend did not impress Jimmie. As he walked up-town the only part of the interview he carried with him was that there must be no scandal. Not on his account. If Jeanne wished it, he assured himself, in spite of the lawyer, he was willing, in the metaphor of that gentleman, to "roll in the dirt and play dead." "Play dead!" The words struck him full in the face. Were he dead and out of the way, Jeanne, without a touch of scandal, could marry the man she loved. Jimmie halted in his tracks. He believed he saw the only possible exit. He turned into a side street, and between the silent houses, closed for the summer, worked out his plan. For long afterward that city block remained in his memory; the doctors' signs on the sills, the caretakers seeking the air, the chauffeurs at the cab rank. For hours they watched the passing and repassing of the young man, who with bent head and fixed eyes struck at the pavement with his stick.

That he should really kill himself Jimmie did not for a moment contemplate. To him self-destruction appeared only as an offense against nature. On his primitive, out-of-door, fox-hunting mind the ethics of suicide lay as uneasily as absinth on the stomach of a baby. But, he argued, by *pretending* he were dead, he could set Jeanne free, could save her from gossip, and could still dream of her, love her, and occupy with her, if not the same continent, the same world.

He had three problems to solve, and as he considered them he devotedly wished he might consult with a brain more clever than his own. But an accomplice was out of the question. Were he to succeed, everybody must be fooled; no one could share his secret. It was "a lone game, played alone, and without my partner."

The three problems were: first, in order to protect his wife, to provide for the suicide a motive other than the attentions of Maddox; second, to make the suicide look like a real suicide; third, without later creating suspicion, to draw enough money from the bank to keep himself alive after he was dead. For his suicide Jeanne must not hold herself to blame; she must not believe her conduct forced his end; above every one else, she must be persuaded that in bringing about his death she was completely

innocent. What reasons then were accepted for suicide?

As to this, Jimmie, refusing to consider the act justified for any reason, was somewhat at a loss. He had read of men who, owing to loss of honor, loss of fortune, loss of health, had "gone out." He was determined he owed it to himself not to go out under a cloud, and he could not lose his money, as then there would be none to leave Jeanne; so he must lose his health. As except for broken arms and collar-bones he never had known a sick-bed, this last was as difficult as the others, but it must serve. After much consideration he decided he would go blind. At least he would pretend he was going blind. To give a semblance of truth to this he would that day consult distinguished oculists and, in spite of their assurances, would tell them that slowly and surely his eyesight was failing him. He would declare to them, in the dread of such a catastrophe, he was of a mind to seek self-destruction. To others he would confide the secret of his blindness and his resolution not to survive it. And, later, all of these would remember and testify.

The question of money also was difficult. After his death he no longer could sign a check or negotiate securities. He must have cash. But if from the bank he drew large sums of

actual money, if he converted stocks and bonds into cash and a week later disappeared, apparently forever, questions as to what became of the sums he had collected would arise, and that his disappearance was genuine would be doubted. This difficulty made Jimmie for a moment wonder if being murdered for his money, and having his body concealed by the murderer, would not be better than suicide. It would, at least, explain the disappearance of the money. But he foresaw that for his murder some innocent one might be suspected and hanged. This suggested leaving behind him evidence to show that the one who murdered him was none other than Proctor Maddox. The idea appealed to his sense of humor and justice. It made the punishment fit the crime. Not without reluctance did he abandon it and return to his plan of suicide. But he recognized that to supply himself with any large sum of money would lead to suspicion and that he must begin his new life almost empty-handed. In his new existence he must work.

For that day and until the next afternoon he remained in town, and in that time prepared the way for his final exit. At a respectable lodging-house on West Twenty-third Street, near the ferry, he gave his name as Henry Hull, and engaged a room. To this room, from a

department store he never before had entered, he shipped a trunk and valise marked with his new initials and filled with clothes to suit his new estate. To supply himself with money, at banks, clubs, and restaurants he cashed many checks for small sums. The total of his collections, from places scattered over all the city, made quite a comfortable bank roll. And in his box at the safe-deposit vault he came upon a windfall. It was an emerald bracelet left him by an eccentric aunt who had lived and died in Paris. The bracelet he had offered to Jeanne, but she did not like it and had advised him to turn it into money and, as the aged relative had wished, spend it upon himself. That was three years since, and now were it missing Jeanne would believe that at some time in the past he had followed her advice. So he carried the bracelet away with him. For a year it would keep a single man in comfort.

His next step was to acquaint himself with the nature of the affliction on account of which he was to destroy himself. At the public library he collected a half-dozen books treating of blindness, and selected his particular malady. He picked out glaucoma, and for his purpose it was admirably suited. For, so Jimmie discovered, in a case of glaucoma the oculist was

completely at the mercy of the patient. Except to the patient the disease gave no sign. To an oculist a man might say, "Three nights ago my eyesight played me the following tricks," and from that the oculist would know the man was stricken with glaucoma; but the eyes would tell him nothing.

The next morning to four oculists Jimmie detailed his symptoms. Each looked grave, and all diagnosed his trouble as glaucoma.

"I knew it!" groaned Jimmie, and assured them sooner than go blind he would jump into the river. They pretended to treat this as an extravagance, but later, when each of them was interviewed, he remembered that Mr. Blagwin had threatened to drown himself. On his way to the train Jimmie purchased a pair of glasses and, in order to invite questions, in the club car pretended to read with them. When his friends expressed surprise, Jimmie told them of the oculists he had consulted, and that they had informed him his case was hopeless. If this proved true, he threatened to drown himself.

On his return home he explained to Jeanne he had seen the lawyer, and that that gentleman suggested the less she knew of what was going on the better. In return Jeanne told him she had sent for Maddox and informed

him that, until the divorce was secured, they had best not be seen together. The wisdom of this appealed even to Maddox, and already, to fill in what remained of the summer, he had departed for Bar Harbor. To Jimmie the relief of his absence was inexpressible. He had given himself only a week to live, and, for the few days still remaining to him, to be alone with Jeanne made him miserably happy. The next morning Jimmie confessed to his wife that his eyes were failing him. The trouble came, he explained, from a fall he had received the year before steeplechasing. He had not before spoken of it, as he did not wish to distress her. The oculists he had consulted gave him no hope. He would end it, he declared, in the gun-room.

Jeanne was thoroughly alarmed. That her old playmate, lover, husband should come to such a plight at the very time she had struck him the hardest blow of all filled her with remorse. In a hundred ways she tried to make up to him for the loss of herself and for the loss of his eyes. She became his constant companion; never had she been so kind and so considerate. They saw no one from the outside, and each day through the wood paths that circled their house made silent pilgrimages. And each day on a bench, placed high, where

the view was fairest, together, and yet so far apart, watched the sun sink into the sound.

"These are the times I will remember," said Jimmie; "when—when I am alone."

The last night they sat on the bench he took out his knife and carved the date—July, 1913.

"What does that mean?" asked Jeanne.

"It means to-night I seem to love you more and need you more than ever before," said Jimmie. "That is what it means. Will you remember?"

Jeanne was looking away from him, but she stretched out her hand and laid it upon his.

"To-morrow I am going to town," said Jimmie, "to see that oculist from Paris. They say what he tells you is the last word. And, if he says——"

Jeanne swung toward him and with all the jealousy of possession held his hand. Her own eyes were blurred with tears.

"He will tell you the others are wrong!" she cried. "I know he will. He must! You—who have always been so kind! God could not be so cruel!"

Jimmie stopped her.

"If I am not to see *you*——"

During his last week at home Jimmie had invented a Doctor Picard, a distinguished French oculist, who, on a tour of the world, was by the

rarest chance at that moment in New York. According to Jimmie, all the other oculists had insisted he must consult Picard, and might consider what Picard said as final. Picard was staying with a friend—Jimmie did not say where—and after receiving Jimmie was at once taking the train for San Francisco. As Jimmie had arranged his scenario, it was Picard who was to deal him his death sentence.

Her husband seemed so entirely to depend on what Picard might say that Jeanne decided, should the verdict be unfavorable, she had best be at his side. But, as this would have upset Jimmie's plan, he argued against it. Should the news be bad, he pointed out, for her to receive it in her own home would be much easier for both. Jeanne felt she had been rebuffed, but that, if Jimmie did not want her with him, she no longer was in a position to insist.

So she contented herself with driving him to the train and, before those who knew them at the station, kissing him good-by.

Afterward, that she had done so comforted her greatly.

"I'll be praying for you, Jimmie," she whispered. "And, as soon as you know, you'll——"

So upset was Jimmie by the kiss, and by the knowledge that he was saying farewell for the last time, that he nearly exposed his purpose.

"I want the last thing I say to you," he stammered, "to be this: that whatever you do will be right. I love you so that I will understand."

When he arrived in New York, in his own name, he booked a stateroom on the *Ceramic*. She was listed to sail that evening after midnight. It was because she departed at that hour that for a week Jimmie had fixed upon her as furnishing the scene of his exit. During the day he told several of his friends that the report of the great oculist had been against him. Later, they recalled that he talked wildly, that he was deeply despondent. In the afternoon he sent a telegram to Jeanne:

Verdict unfavorable. Will remain to-night in town. All love. J.

At midnight he went on board. The decks and saloons were swarming and noisy with seagoers, many of whom had come to the ship directly from the theatres and restaurants, the women bareheaded, in evening gowns. Jimmie felt grateful to them. They gave to the moment of his taking off an air of gentle gayety. Among those who were sailing, and those who had come to wish them "bon voyage," many were known to Jimmie. He told them he was going abroad at the command of his oculist.

Also, he forced himself upon the notice of officers and stewards, giving them his name, and making inquiries concerning the non-appearance of fictitious baggage. Later, they also recalled the young man in dinner-jacket and golf-cap who had lost a dressing-case marked "James Blagwin."

In his cabin Jimmie wrote two letters. The one to the captain of the ship read:

After we pass Fire Island I am going overboard. Do not make any effort to find me, as it will be useless. I am sorry to put you to this trouble.

The second letter was to Jeanne. It read:

Picard agreed with the others. My case is hopeless. I am ending all to-night. Forgive me. I leave you all the love in all the world. Jimmie.

When he had addressed these letters he rang for the steward.

"I am not going to wait until we leave the dock," he said. "I am turning in now. I am very tired, and I don't want you to wake me on any excuse whatsoever until to-morrow at noon. Better still, don't come until I ring!"

When the steward had left him, Jimmie pinned the two letters upon the pillow, changed the steamer-cap for an Alpine hat, and beneath a rain-coat concealed his evening clothes. He

had purposely selected the deck cabin farthest aft. Accordingly, when after making the cabin dark he slipped from it, the break in the deck that separated the first from the second class passengers was but a step distant. The going-ashore bugles had sounded, and more tumult than would have followed had the ship struck a rock now spread to every deck. With sharp commands officers were speeding the parting guests; the parting guests were shouting passionate good-bys and sending messages to Aunt Maria; quartermasters howled hoarse warnings, donkey-engines panted under the weight of belated luggage, fall and tackle groaned and strained. And the ship's siren, enraged at the delay, protested in one long-drawn-out, inarticulate shriek.

Jimmie slipped down the accommodation ladder that led to the well-deck, side-stepped a yawning hatch, dodged a swinging cargo net stuffed with trunks, and entered the second-class smoking-room. From there he elbowed his way to the second-class promenade deck. A stream of tearful and hilarious visitors who, like sheep in a chute, were being herded down the gangway, engulfed him. Unresisting, Jimmie let himself, by weight of numbers, be carried forward.

A moment later he was shot back to the dock

and to the country from which at that moment, in deck cabin A4, he was supposed to be drawing steadily away.

Dodging the electric lights, on foot he made his way to his lodging-house. The night was warm and moist, and, seated on the stoop, stripped to shirt and trousers, was his landlord.

He greeted Jimmie affably.

"'Evening, Mr. Hull," he said. "Hope this heat won't keep you awake."

Jimmie thanked him and passed hurriedly.

"Mr. Hull!"

The landlord had said it.

Somewhere out at sea, between Fire Island and Scotland Lightship, the waves were worrying with what once had been Jimmie Blagwin, and in a hall bedroom on Twenty-third Street Henry Hull, with frightened eyes, sat staring across the wharves, across the river, thinking of a farmhouse on Long Island.

His last week on earth had been more of a strain on Jimmie than he appreciated; and the night the *Ceramic* sailed he slept the drugged sleep of complete nervous exhaustion. Late the next morning, while he still slept, a passenger on the *Ceramic* stumbled upon the fact of his disappearance. The man knew Jimmie; had greeted him the night before when he came on board, and was seeking him that he

might subscribe to a pool on the run. When to his attack on Jimmie's door there was no reply, he peered through the air-port, saw on the pillow, where Jimmie's head should have been, two letters, and reported to the purser. Already the ship was three hundred miles from where Jimmie had announced he would drown himself; a search showed he was not on board, and the evidence of a smoking-room steward, who testified that at one o'clock he had left Mr. Blagwin alone on deck, gazing "mournful-like" at Fire Island, seemed to prove Jimmie had carried out his threat. When later the same passenger the steward had mistaken for Jimmie appeared in the smoking-room and ordered a drink from him, the steward was rattled. But as the person who had last seen Jimmie Blagwin alive he had gained melancholy interest, and, as his oft-told tale was bringing him many shillings, he did not correct it. Accordingly, from Cape Sable the news of Jimmie's suicide was reported. That afternoon it appeared in all the late editions of the evening papers.

Pleading fever, Jimmie explained to his landlord that for him to venture out by day was most dangerous, and sent the landlord after the newspapers. The feelings with which he read them were mixed. He was proud of the complete success of his plot, but the inevitable-

ness of it terrified him. The success was *too* complete. He had left himself no loophole. He had locked the door on himself and thrown the key out of the window. Now, that she was lost to him forever, he found, if that were possible, he loved his wife more devotedly than before. He felt that to live in the same world with Jeanne and never speak to her, never even look at her, could not be borne. He was of a mind to rush to the wharf and take another leap into the dark waters, and this time without a life-line. From this he was restrained only by the thought that if he used infinite caution, at infrequent intervals, at a great distance, he still might look upon his wife. This he assured himself would be possible only after many years had aged him and turned his hair gray. Then on second thoughts he believed to wait so long was not absolutely necessary. It would be safe enough, he argued, if he grew a beard. He always had been clean-shaven, and he was confident a beard would disguise him. He wondered how long a time must pass before one would grow. Once on a hunting-trip he had gone for two weeks without shaving, and the result had not only disguised but disgusted him. His face had changed to one like those carved on cocoanuts. A recollection of this gave him great pleasure. His spirits rose happily. He

saw himself in the rags of a tramp, his face hidden in an unkempt beard, skulking behind the hedges that surrounded his house. From this view-point, before sailing away from her forever, he would again steal a look at Jeanne. He determined to postpone his departure until he had grown a beard. Meanwhile he would plead illness, and keep to his room, or venture out only at night. Comforted by the thought that in two weeks he might again see his wife, as she sat on the terrace or walked in her gardens, he sank peaceably to sleep.

The next morning the landlord brought him the papers. In them were many pictures of himself as a master of foxhounds, as a polo-player, as a gentleman jockey. The landlord looked at him curiously. Five minutes later, on a trivial excuse, he returned and again studied Jimmie as closely as though he were about to paint his portrait. Then two of the other boarders, chums of the landlord, knocked at the door, to borrow a match, to beg the loan of the morning paper. Each was obviously excited, each stared accusingly. Jimmie fell into a panic. He felt that if already his identity was questioned, than hiding in his room and growing a beard nothing could be more suspicious. At noon, for West Indian ports, a German boat was listed to sail from the Twenty-

fourth Street wharf. Jimmie decided at once to sail with her and, until his beard was grown, not to return. It was necessary first to escape the suspicious landlord, and to that end he noiselessly packed his trunk and suit-case. In front of the house, in an unending procession, taxi-cabs returning empty from the Twenty-third Street ferry passed the door, and from the street Jimmie hailed one. Before the landlord could voice his doubts Jimmie was on the sidewalk, his bill had been paid, and, giving the address of a hotel on Fourteenth Street, he was away.

At the Fourteenth Street hotel Jimmie dismissed the taxi-cab and asked for a room adjoining an imaginary Senator Gates. When the clerk told him Senator Gates was not at that hotel, Jimmie excitedly demanded to be led to the telephone. He telephoned the office of the steamship line and, in the name of Henry Hull, secured a cabin. Then he explained to the clerk that over the telephone he had learned that his friend, Senator Gates, was at another hotel. He regretted that he must follow him. Another taxi was called, and Jimmie drove to an inconspicuous and old-fashioned hotel on the lower East Side, patronized exclusively by gunmen. There, in not finding Senator Gates, he was again disappointed, and now having

broken the link that connected him with the suspicious landlord, he drove back to within a block of his original starting-point and went on board the ship. Not until she was off Sandy Hook did he leave his cabin.

It was July, and passengers to the tropics were few; and when Jimmie ventured on deck he found most of them gathered at the port rail. They were gazing intently over the ship's side. Thinking the pilot might be leaving, Jimmie joined them. A young man in a yachting-cap was pointing north and speaking in the voice of a conductor of a "seeing New York" car.

"Just between that lighthouse and the bow of this ship," he exclaimed, "is where yesterday James Blagwin jumped overboard. At any moment we may see the body!"

An excitable passenger cried aloud and pointed at some floating seaweed.

"I'll bet that's it now!" he shouted.

Jimmie exclaimed indignantly:

"I'll bet you ten dollars it isn't!" he said.

In time the ship touched at Santiago, Kingston, and Colon, but, fearing recognition, Jimmie saw these places only from the deck. He travelled too fast for newspapers to overtake him, and those that on the return passage met the ship, of his death gave no details. So, ex-

cept that his suicide had been accepted, Jimmie knew nothing.

Least of all did he know, or even guess, that his act of renunciation, intended to bring to Jeanne happiness, had nearly brought about her own end. She believed Jimmie was dead, but not for a moment did she believe it was for fear of blindness he had killed himself. She and Maddox had killed him. Between them they had murdered the man who, now that he was gone, she found she loved devotedly. To a shocked and frightened letter of condolence from Maddox she wrote one that forever ordered him out of her life. Then she set about making a saint of Jimmie, and counting the days when in another world they would meet, and her years of remorse, penitence, and devotion would cause him to forgive her. In their home she shut herself off from every one. She made of it a shrine to Jimmie. She kept his gloves on the hall table; on her writing-desk she placed flowers before his picture. Preston, the butler, and the other servants who had been long with them feared for her sanity, but, loving "Mr. James" as they did, sympathized with her morbidness. So, in the old farmhouse, it was as though Jimmie still stamped through the halls, or from his room, as he dressed, whistled merrily. In the kennels the hounds

howled dismally, in the stables at each footstep the ponies stamped with impatience, on the terrace his house dog, Huang Su, lay with his eyes fixed upon the road waiting for the return of the master, and in the gardens a girl in black, wasted and white-faced, walked alone and rebelled that she was still alive.

After six weeks, when the ship re-entered New York harbor, Jimmie, his beard having grown, and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, walked boldly down the gangplank. His confidence was not misplaced. The polo-player, clean-faced, lean, and fit, had disappeared. Six weeks of German cooking, a German barber, and the spectacles had produced a graduate of Heidelberg.

At a furnished room on a side street Jimmie left his baggage, and at once at the public library, in the back numbers of the daily papers, read the accounts of his death and interviews with his friends. They all agreed the reason for his suicide was his fear of approaching blindness. As he read, Jimmie became deeply depressed. Any sneaking hopes he might have held that he was not dead were now destroyed. The evidence of his friends was enough to convince any one. It convinced him. Now that it was too late, his act of self-sacrifice appeared supremely stupid and ridiculous. Bitterly he

attacked himself as a bungler and an ass. He assured himself he should have made a fight for it; should have fought for his wife and against Maddox. Instead of which he weakly had effaced himself, had surrendered his rights, had abandoned his wife at a time when most was required of him. He tortured himself by thinking that probably at that very moment she was in need of his help. And at that very moment head-lines in the paper he was searching proved this was true.

"BLAGWIN'S LOST WILL," he read. "DETECTIVES RELINQUISH SEARCH! REWARD OF TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FAILS TO BRING CLEW!" Jimmie raced through the back numbers. They told him his will, in which he had left everything to Jeanne, could not be found; that in consequence, except her widow's third, all of his real estate, which was the bulk of his property, would now go to two distant cousins who already possessed more than was good for them, and who in Paris were leading lives of elegant wastefulness. The will had been signed the week before his wedding-day, but the lawyer who had drawn it was dead, and the witnesses, two servants, had long since quit Jimmie's service and could not be found. It was known Jimmie kept the will in the safe at his country house, but from the safe it had disappeared.

Jimmie's best friend, and now Jeanne's lawyer, the man who had refused him the divorce, had searched the house from the attic to the coal cellar; detectives had failed to detect; rewards had remained unclaimed; no one could tell where the will was hidden. Only Jimmie could tell. And Jimmie was dead. And no one knew that better than Jimmie. Again he upbraided himself. Why had he not foreseen this catastrophe? Why, before his final taking off, had he not returned the will to the safe? Now, a word from him would give Jeanne all his fortune, and that word he could not speak.

The will was between the leaves of a copy of "Pickwick," and it stood on a shelf in his bedroom. One night, six months before, to alter a small bequest, he had carried the will up-stairs and written a rough draft of the new codicil. And then, merely because he was sleepy and disinclined to struggle with a combination lock, he had stuck the will in the book he was reading. He intended the first thing the next morning to put it back in the safe. But the first thing the next morning word came from the kennels that during the night six beagle puppies had arrived, and naturally Jimmie gave no thought to anything so unimportant as a will. Nor since then had he thought of it. And now how was he, a dead man, to retrieve it?

That those in the library might not observe his agitation, he went outside, and in Bryant Park on a bench faced his problem. Except himself, of the hidden place of the will no one could possibly know. So, if even by an anonymous letter, or by telephone, he gave the information to his late lawyer or to the detectives, they at once would guess from where the clew came and that James Blagwin was still alive. So that plan was abandoned. Then he wondered if he might not convey the tip to some one who had access to his bedroom; his valet or a chambermaid who, as though by accident, might stumble upon the will. But, as every one would know the anonymous tipster could be only Blagwin himself, that plan also was rejected. He saw himself in a blind alley. Without an accomplice he could not act; with an accomplice his secret would be betrayed.

Suddenly a line in one of the newspapers returned to him. It was to the effect that to discover the lost will several clairvoyants, mediums, and crystal-gazers had offered their services. Jimmie determined that one of these should be his accomplice. He would tell the clairvoyant he formerly had been employed as valet by Blagwin and knew where Blagwin had placed his will. But he had been discharged under circumstances that made it necessary for

him to lie low. He would hint it was the police he feared. This would explain why he could not come forward, and why he sought the aid of the clairvoyant. If the clairvoyant fell in with his plan he would tell him where the will could be found, the clairvoyant would pretend in a trance to discover the hiding-place, would confide his discovery to Mrs. Blagwin's lawyer, the lawyer would find the will, the clairvoyant would receive the reward, and an invaluable advertisement. And Jimmie's ghost would rest in peace. He needed only a clairvoyant who was not so upright that he fell over backward. Jimmie assured himself one of that kind would not be difficult to find.

He returned to the newspaper-room of the library and in the advertising columns of a Sunday paper found a clairvoyant who promised to be the man he wanted.

He was an Indian prince, but for five dollars would tell fortunes, cast horoscopes, and recover lost articles. Jimmie found him in the back room on the first floor of an old-fashioned house of sandstone on a side street. A blonde young woman, who was directing envelopes and enclosing in them the business card of the prince, accepted Jimmie's five dollars and ushered him into the presence. The back room was very dark. There were no windows show-

ing, and the walls were entirely hidden by curtains in which twinkled tiny mirrors. The only light came from a lamp that swung on chains.

The prince was young, tall, dark-skinned, with a black, pointed beard. He wore his national costume and over it many necklaces of strange stones, and of jewels more strange. He sat on a papier-mâché throne with gilded elephants for supports, and in his hand held a crystal globe. His head was all but hidden in an enormous silken turban on which hung a single pearl. Jimmie made up his mind that if the prince was no more on the level than his jewels there would be no trouble.

Jimmie came quickly to the point.

"I can't show up," he explained, "because after I lost my job as Mr. Blagwin's valet several articles of value were missing. But *you* can show up for me. If the will is not where I saw it—where I tell you it is—you're no worse off than you are now. You can say the spirits misled you. But, if I'm telling you the truth, you stand to get half the reward and the biggest press story any ghost-raiser ever put across.

"And why," in conclusion Jimmie demanded, "should I ask you to do this, if what I say is not true?"

The prince made no reply.

With a sweeping gesture he brought the crystal globe into his lap and, bending his head, apparently peered into its depths. In reality he was gaining time. To himself he was repeating Jimmie's question. If the stranger were *not* speaking the truth, why was he asking him to join in a plot to deceive? The possibility that Jimmie *was* telling the truth the prince did not even consider. He was not used to the truth, and as to the motives of Jimmie in inviting him to break the law he already had made his guess. It was that Jimmie must be a detective setting a trap which later would betray him to the police. And the prince had no desire to fall in with the police nor to fall out with them. All he ever asked of those gentlemen was to leave him alone. And, since apparently they would not leave him alone, he saw, deep down in the crystal globe, a way by which not only could he avoid their trap, but might spring it to his own advantage.

Instead of the detective denouncing him, he would denounce the detective. Of the police he would become an ally. He would call upon them to arrest a man who was planning to blackmail Mrs. James Blagwin.

Unseen by Jimmie, in the arm of his throne he pressed an electric button, and in the front room in the ear of the blonde a signal buzzed.

In her turn the blonde pushed aside the curtains that hid the door to the front hall.

"Pardon, Highness," she said, "a certain party in Wall Street"—she paused impressively, and the prince nodded—"wants to consult you about his Standard Oil stock."

"He must wait," returned the prince.

"Pardon, Highness," persisted the lady; "he cannot wait. It is a matter of millions."

Of this dialogue, which was the vehicle always used to get the prince out of the audience-chamber and into the front hall, undoubtedly the best line was the one given to the blonde—"It is a matter of millions!"

Knowing this, she used to speak it slowly and impressively. It impressed even Jimmie. And after the prince had reverently deposited his globe upon a velvet cushion and disappeared, Jimmie sat wondering who in Wall Street was rich enough to buy Standard Oil stock, and who was fool enough to sell it.

But over such idle questions he was not long left to meditate. Something more personal demanded his full attention. Behind him the prince carefully had closed the door to the front hall. But, not having his crystal globe with him, he did not know it had not remained closed, and as he stood under the hall stairs and softly lifted the receiver from the tele-

phone, he was not aware that his voice carried to the room in which Jimmie was waiting.

"Hello," whispered the prince softly. His voice, Jimmie noted with approval, even over a public telephone was as gentle as a cooing dove.

"Hello! Give me Spring 3100."

A cold sweat swept down Jimmie's spine. A man might forget his birthday, his middle name, his own telephone number, but not Spring 3100!

Every drama of the underworld, crook play, and detective story had helped to make it famous.

Jimmie stood not upon the order of his going. Even while police headquarters was telling the prince to get the Forty-seventh Street police station, Jimmie had torn open the front door and was leaping down the steps.

Not until he reached Sixth Avenue, where if a man is seen running every one takes a chance and yells "Stop thief!" did Jimmie draw a halt. Then he burst forth indignantly.

"How was I to know he was honest!" he panted. "He's a hell of a clairvoyant!"

With indignation as great the prince was gazing at the blonde secretary; his eyes were filled with amazement.

"Am I going dippy?" he demanded. "I

sized him up for a detective—and he was a perfectly honest crook! And in five minutes," he roared remorsefully, "this house will be full of bulls! What am I to do? What am I to tell 'em?"

"Tell 'em," said the blonde coldly, "you're going on a long journey."

Jimmie now appreciated that when he determined it was best he should work without an accomplice he was most wise. He must work alone and, lest the clairvoyant had set the police after him, at once. He decided swiftly that that night he would return to his own house, and that he would return as a burglar. From its hiding-place he would rescue the missing will and restore it to the safe. By placing it among papers of little importance he hoped to persuade those who already had searched the safe that through their own carelessness it had been overlooked. The next morning, when once more it was where the proper persons could find it, he would again take ship for foreign parts. Jimmie recognized that this was a desperate plan, but the situation was desperate.

And so midnight found him entering the grounds upon which he never again had hoped to place his foot.

The conditions were in his favor. The night was warm, which meant windows would be

left open; few stars were shining, and as he tiptoed across the lawn the trees and bushes wrapped him in shadows. Inside the hedge, through which he had forced his way, he had left his shoes, and he moved in silence. Except that stealing into the house where lay asleep the wife he so dearly loved made a cruel assault upon his feelings, the adventure presented no difficulties. Of ways of entering his house Jimmie knew a dozen, and, once inside, from cellar to attic he could move blindfolded. His bedroom, where was the copy of "Pickwick" in which he had placed the will, was separated from his wife's bedroom by her boudoir. The walls were thick; through them no ordinary sound could penetrate, and, unless since his departure Jeanne had moved her maid or some other chaperon into his bedroom, he could ransack it at his leisure. The safe in which he would replace the will was in the dining-room. From the sleeping-quarters of Preston, the butler, and the other servants it was far removed.

Cautiously in the black shadows of the trees Jimmie reconnoitred. All that was in evidence reassured him. The old farmhouse lay sunk in slumber, and, though in the lower hall a lamp burned, Jimmie knew it was lit only that, in case of fire or of an intruder like himself, it might show the way to the telephone. For a

moment a lace curtain fluttering at an open window startled him, but in an instant he was reassured, and had determined through that window to make his entrance. He stepped out of the shadows toward the veranda, and at once something warm brushed his leg, something moist touched his hand.

Huang Su, his black chow, was welcoming him home. In a sudden access of fright and pleasure Jimmie dropped to his knees. He had not known he had been so lonely. He smothered the black bear in his hands. Huang Su withdrew hastily. The dignity of his breed forbade man-handling, and at a safe distance he stretched himself nervously and yawned.

Jimmie stepped to the railing of the veranda, raised his foot to a cleat of the awning, and swung himself sprawling upon the veranda roof. On hands and knees across the shingles, still warm from the sun, he crept to the open window. There for some minutes, while his eyes searched the room, he remained motionless. When his eyes grew used to the semidarkness he saw that the bed lay flat, that the door to the boudoir was shut, that the room was empty. As he moved across it toward the bookcase, his stockinged feet on the bare oak floor gave forth no sound. He assured himself there was no occasion for alarm. But when, with the

electric torch with which he had prepared himself, he swept the book-shelves, he suffered all the awful terrors of a thief.

His purpose was to restore a lost fortune; had he been intent on stealing one he could not have felt more deeply guilty. At last the tiny shaft of light fell upon the title of the "Pickwick Papers." With shaking fingers Jimmie drew the book toward him. In his hands it fell open, and before him lay "The Last Will and Testament of James Blagwin, Esquire."

With an effort Jimmie choked a cry of delight. He had reason to feel relief. In dragging the will from its hiding-place he had put behind him the most difficult part of his adventure; the final ceremony of replacing it in the safe was a matter only of minutes. With self-satisfaction Jimmie smiled; in self-pity he sighed miserably. For, when those same minutes had passed, again he would be an exile. As soon as he had set his house in order, he must leave it, and once more upon the earth become a wanderer and an outcast.

The knob of the door from the bedroom he grasped softly and, as he turned it, firmly. Stealthily, with infinite patience and stepping close to the wall, he descended the stairs, tiptoed across the hall, and entered the living-room. On the lower floor he knew he was

alone. No longer, like Oliver Twist breaking into the scullery of Mr. Giles, need he move in dreadful fear. But as a cautious general, even when he advances, maps out his line of retreat, before approaching the safe Jimmie prepared his escape. The only entrances to the dining-room were through the living-room, in which he stood, and from the butler's pantry. It was through the latter he determined to make his exit. He crossed the dining-room, and in the pantry cautiously raised the window, and on the floor below placed a chair. If while at work upon the safe he were interrupted, to reach the lawn he had but to thrust back the door to the pantry, leap to the chair, and through the open window fall upon the grass. If his possible pursuers gave him time, he would retrieve his shoes; if not, he would abandon them. They had not been made to his order, but bought in the Sixth Avenue store where he was unknown, and they had been delivered to a man named Henry Hull. If found, instead of compromising him, they rather would help to prove the intruder was a stranger.

Having arranged his get-away, Jimmie returned to the living-room. In defiance of caution and that he might carry with him a farewell picture of the place where for years he had been so supremely happy, he swept it with his torch.

The light fell upon Jeanne's writing-desk and there halted. Jimmie gave a low gasp of pleasure and surprise. In the shaft of light, undisturbed in their silver frames and in their place of honor, he saw three photographs of himself. The tears came to his eyes. Then Jeanne had not cast him utterly into outer darkness. She still remembered him kindly, still held for him a feeling of good will. Jimmie sighed gratefully. The sacrifice he had made for the happiness of Jeanne and Maddox now seemed easier to bear. And that happiness must not be jeopardized.

More than ever before the fact that he, a dead man, must not be seen, impressed him deeply. At the slightest sound, at even the suggestion of an alarm, he must fly. The will might take care of itself. In case he were interrupted, where he dropped it there must it lie. The fact of supreme importance was that unrecognized he should escape.

The walls of the dining-room were covered with panels of oak, and built into the jog of the fireplace and concealed by a movable panel was the safe. In front of it Jimmie sank to his knees and pushed back the panel. Propped upon a chair behind him, the electric torch threw its shaft of light full upon the combination lock. On the floor, ready to his hand, lay the will.

The combination was not difficult. It required two turns left, three right, and in conjunction two numerals. While so intent upon his work that he scarcely breathed, Jimmie spun the knob. Then he tugged gently, and the steel door swung toward him.

At the same moment, from behind him, a metallic click gave an instant's warning, and then the room was flooded with light.

From his knees, in one bound, Jimmie flung himself toward his avenue of escape.

It was blocked by the bulky form of Preston, the butler.

Jimmie turned and doubled back to the door of the living-room. He found himself confronted by his wife.

The sleeve of her night-dress had fallen to her shoulder and showed her white arm extended toward him. In her hand, pointing, was an automatic pistol.

Already dead, Jimmie feared nothing but discovery.

The door to the living-room was wide enough for two. With his head down he sprang toward it. There was a report that seemed to shake the walls, and something like the blow of a nightstick knocked his leg from under him and threw him on his back. The next instant Preston had landed with both knees on his lower ribs and was squeezing his windpipe.

Jimmie felt he was drowning. Around him millions of stars danced. And then from another world, in a howl of terror, the voice of Preston screamed. The hands of the butler released their hold upon his throat. As suddenly as he had thrown himself upon him he now recoiled.

"It's *'im!*" he shouted; "it's *'im!*"

"Him?" demanded Jeanne.

"*It's Mr. Blagwin!*"

Unlike Preston, Jeanne did not scream; nor did she faint. So greatly did she desire to believe that "'im" was her husband, that he still was in the same world with herself, that she did not ask how he had escaped from the other world, or why, having escaped, he spent his time robbing his own house.

Instead, much like Preston, she threw herself at him and in her young, firm arms lifted him and held him close.

"Jimmie!" she cried, "*speak* to me; *speak* to me!"

The blow on the back of the head, the throttling by Preston, the "stopping power" of the bullet, even though it passed only through his leg, had left Jimmie somewhat confused. He knew only that it was a dream. But wonderful as it was to dream that once more he was with Jeanne, that she clung to him, needed and

welcomed him, he could not linger to enjoy the dream. He was dead. If not, he must escape. Honor compelled it. He made a movement to rise, and fell back.

The voice of Preston, because he had choked his master, full of remorse, and, because his mistress had shot him, full of reproach, rose in dismay:

"You've 'it 'im in the leg, ma'am!"

Jimmie heard Jeanne protest hysterically:

"That's nothing, he's *alive!*" she cried. "I'd hit him again if it would only make him *speak!*" She pressed the bearded face against her own. "Speak to me," she whispered; "tell me you forgive me. Tell me you love me!"

Jimmie opened his eyes and smiled at her.

"You never had to shoot me," he stammered, "to make me tell you *that*."

VERA, THE MEDIUM

VERA, THE MEDIUM

PART I

Happy in the hope that the news was "exclusive," the *Despatch* had thrown the name of Stephen Hallowell, his portrait, a picture of his house, and the words, "At Point of Death!" across three columns. The announcement was heavy, lachrymose, bristling with the melancholy self-importance of the man who "saw the deceased, just two minutes before the train hit him."

But the effect of the news fell short of the effort. Save that city editors were irritated, that the presidents of certain railroads figured hastily on slips of paper, the fact that an old man and his millions would soon be parted, left New York undisturbed.

In the early '80's this would not have been so. Then, in the uplifting of the far West, Stephen Hallowell was a national figure, in the manœuvres of the Eastern stock market an active, alert power. In those days, when a man with a few millions was still listed as rich, his fortune was considered colossal.

A patent coupling-pin, the invention of his

brother-in-law, had given him his start, and, in introducing it, and in his efforts to force it upon the new railroads of the West, he had obtained a knowledge of their affairs. From that knowledge came his wealth. That was twenty years ago. Since then giants had arisen in the land; men whose wealth made the fortune of Stephen Hallowell appear a comfortable competence, his schemes and stratagems, which, in their day, had bewildered Wall Street, as simple as the trading across the counter of a crossroads store.

For years he had been out of it. He had lost count. Disuse and ill-health had rendered his mind feeble, made him at times suspicious, at times childishly credulous. Without friends, alone with his physician and the butler, who was also his nurse, he lived in the house that in '76, in a burst of vanity, he had built on Fifth Avenue. Then the house was a "mansion," and its front of brown sandstone the outward sign of wealth and fashion. Now, on one side, it rubbed shoulders with the shop of a man milliner, and across the street the houses had been torn down, and replaced by a department store. Now, instead of a sombre jail-like façade, his outlook was a row of waxen ladies, who, before each change of season, appeared in new and gorgeous raiment, and,

across the Avenue, for his approval, smiled continually.

"It is time you moved, Stephen," urged his friend and lawyer, Judge Henry Gaylor. "I can get you twice as much for this lot as you paid for both it and the house."

But Mr. Hallowell always shook his head. "Where would I go, Henry?" he would ask. "What would I do with the money? No, I will live in this house until I am carried out of it."

. . . . . .

With distaste, the irritated city editors "followed up" the three-column story of the *Despatch*.

"Find out if there's any truth in that," they commanded. "The old man won't see you, but get a talk out of Rainey. And see Judge Gaylor. He's close to Hallowell. Find out from him if that story didn't start as a bear yarn in Wall Street."

So, when Walsh of the *Despatch* was conducted by Garrett, the butler of Mr. Hallowell, upstairs to that gentleman's library, he found a group of reporters already intrenched. At the door that opened from the library to the bedroom, the butler paused. "What paper shall I say?" he asked.

"The *Despatch*," Walsh told him.

The servant turned quickly and stared at Walsh.

He appeared the typical butler, an Englishman of over forty, heavily built, soft-moving, with ruddy, smooth-shaven cheeks and prematurely gray hair. But now, from his face the look of perfunctory politeness had fallen; the subdued voice had changed to a snarl that carried with it the accents of the Tenderloin.

"So, you're the one, are you?" the man muttered.

For a moment he stood scowling; insolent, almost threatening; and then, once more the servant opened the door and noiselessly closed it behind him.

The transition had been so abrupt, the revelation so unexpected, that the men laughed.

"I don't blame him!" said young Irving, "I couldn't find a single fact in the whole story. How'd your people get it; pretty straight?"

"Seemed straight to us," said Walsh.

"Well, you didn't handle it that way," returned the other. "Why didn't you quote Rainey or Gaylor? It seems to me if a man's on the point of death" — he lowered his voice and glanced toward the closed door — "that his private doctor and his lawyer might know *something* about it."

Standing alone with his back to the window was a reporter who had greeted no one and to whom no one had spoken.

Had he held himself erect he would have been tall, but he stood slouching lazily, his shoulders bent, his hands in his pockets. When he spoke his voice was in keeping with the indolence of his bearing. It was soft, hesitating, carrying with it the courteous deference of the South. Only his eyes showed that to what was going forward he was alert and attentive.

"Is Dr. Rainey Mr. Hallowell's family doctor?" he asked.

Irving surveyed him in amused superiority.

"He is!" he answered. "You been long in New York?" he asked.

Upon the stranger the sarcasm was lost, or he chose to ignore it, for he answered simply, "No, I'm a New Orleans boy. I've just been taken on the *Republic*."

"Welcome to our city," said Irving. "What do you think of our Main Street?"

From the hall a tall, portly man entered the room with the assurance of one much at home here; and with an exclamation Irving fell upon him.

"Good-morning, Judge," he called. He waved at him the clipping from the *Despatch*. "Have you seen this?"

Judge Gaylor accepted the slip of paper gingerly, and in turn moved his fine head pompously toward each of the young men. Most of them were known to him, but for the moment he preferred to appear too deeply concerned to greet them. With an expression of shocked indignation, he recognized only Walsh.

"Yes, I have seen it," he said, "and there is not a word of truth in it! Mr. Walsh, I am surprised! *You*, of all people!"

"We got it on very good authority," said the reporter.

"But why not call me up, and get the facts?" demanded the Judge. "I was here until twelve o'clock, and——"

"Here!" interrupted Irving. "Then he did have a collapse?"

Judge Gaylor swung upon his heel.

"Certainly not," he retorted angrily. "I was here on business; and I have never known his mind more capable, more alert." He lifted his hands with an enthusiastic gesture. "I wish you could have seen him!"

"Well," urged Irving, "how about our seeing him now?"

For a moment Judge Gaylor permitted his annoyance to appear, but he at once recovered, and murmuring cheerfully, "Certainly, certainly; I'll try to arrange it," turned to the butler, who had re-entered the room.

"Garrett," he inquired, "is Mr. Hallowell awake yet?" As he asked the question his eyebrows rose; with an almost imperceptible shake of the head, he signalled for an answer in the negative.

"Well, there you are!" the Judge exclaimed heartily. "I can't wake him, even to oblige you. In a word, gentlemen, Stephen Hallowell has never been in better health, mentally and bodily. You can say that from me—and that's all there is to say."

"Then, we can say," persisted Irving, "that *you* say, that Walsh's story is a fake?"

"You can say it is not true," corrected Gaylor. "That's all, gentlemen." The audience was at an end. The young men moved toward the hall and Judge Gaylor turned to the bedroom. As he did so, he found that the new man on the *Republic* still held his ground.

"Could I have a word with you, sir?" the stranger asked. The reporters halted jealously. Again Gaylor showed his impatience.

"About Mr. Hallowell's health?" he demanded. "There's nothing more to say."

"No, it's not about his health," ventured the reporter.

"Well, not now. I am very late this morning." The Judge again moved to the bedroom and the reporter, as though accepting the verdict, started to follow the others. As he did

so, as though in explanation, or as a warning, he added: "You *said* to always come to you for the facts." The lawyer halted, hesitating. "What facts do you want?" he asked. The reporter bowed, and waved his broad felt hat toward the listening men. In polite embarrassment he explained what he had to say could not be spoken in their presence.

Something in the manner of the stranger led Judge Gaylor to pause. He directed Garrett to accompany the reporters from the room. Then, with mock politeness, he turned to the one who remained. "I take it, you are a newcomer in New York journalism. What is your name?" he asked.

"My name is Homer Lee," said the Southerner. "I am a New Orleans boy. I've been only a month in your city. Judge," he began earnestly, but in a voice which still held the drawl of the South, "I met a man from home last week on Broadway. He belonged to that spiritualistic school on Carondelet Street. He knows all that's going on in the spook world, and he tells me the ghost-raisers have got their hooks into the old man pretty deep. Is that so?"

The bewilderment of Judge Gaylor was complete, and, without question, genuine.

"I don't know what you mean?" he said.

"My informant tells me," continued the

reporter, "that Mr. Hallowell has embraced—if that's what you call it—spiritualism."

Gaylor started forward.

"What!" he roared.

Unmoved, the other regarded the Judge keenly.

"Spiritualism," he repeated, "and that a bunch of these mediums have got him so hypnotized he can't call his soul his own, or his money, either. Is that true?"

Judge Gaylor's outburst was overwhelming. That it was genuine Mr. Lee, observing him closely, was convinced.

"Of all the outrageous, ridiculous—" the Judge halted, gasping for words, "and libellous statements!" he went on. "If you print that," he thundered, "Mr. Hallowell will sue your paper for half a million dollars. Can't you see the damage you would do? Can't your people see that if the idea got about that he was unable to direct his own affairs, that he was in the hands of mediums, it would invalidate everything he does? After his death, every act of his at this time, every paper he had signed, would be suspected, and—and—" stammered the Judge as his imagination pictured what might follow, "they might even attack his will!" He advanced truculently. "Do you mean to publish this libel?"

Lee moved his shoulders in deprecation. "I'm afraid we *must*," he said.

"You must!" demanded Gaylor. "After what I've told you? Do you think I'm lying to you?"

"No," said the reporter; "I don't think you are. Looks more like you didn't know."

"Not know? I?" Gaylor laughed hysterically. "I am his lawyer. I am his best friend! Who *will* you believe?" He stepped to the table and pressed an electric button, and Garrett appeared in the hall. "Tell Dr. Rainey I want to see him," Gaylor commanded, "and return with him."

As they waited, Judge Gaylor paced quickly to and fro. "I've had to deny some pretty silly stories about Mr. Hallowell," he said, "but of all the absurd, malicious—there's some enemy back of this, some one in Wall Street is doing this. But I'll find him—I'll—" He was interrupted by the entrance of the butler and Dr. Rainey, Mr. Hallowell's personal physician.

Rainey was a young man with a weak face, and knowing, shifting eyes that blinked behind a pair of eye-glasses. To conceal an indecision of character of which he was quite conscious, he assumed a manner that, according to whom he addressed, was familiar or condescending. At one of the big hospitals he had been an am-

bulance surgeon and resident physician, later he had started upon a somewhat doubtful career as a medical "expert." Only two years had passed since the police and the reporters of the Tenderloin had ceased calling him "Doc." In a celebrated criminal case in which Gaylor had acted as chief counsel, he had found Rainey complaisant and apparently totally without the moral sense. And when in Garrett he had discovered for Mr. Hallowell a model servant, he had also urged upon his friend, for his resident physician, his *protégé* Rainey.

Still at white heat, the older man began abruptly.

"This gentleman is from the *Republic*. He is going to publish a story that Mr. Hallowell has fallen under the influence of mediums, clairvoyants; that everything he does is on advice from the spirit world—" He turned sharply upon Lee. "Is that right?" The reporter nodded.

"You can see the effect of such a story. It would invalidate every act of Mr. Hallowell's!"

Dr. Rainey laughed offensively.

"It might," he said, "but who'd believe it?"

"He believes it!" cried Gaylor, "or he pretends to believe it. Tell him!" he commanded. "He won't believe me. Does Mr. Hallowell associate with mediums, and spirits—and spooks?"

Again the young doctor laughed.

"Of course not!" he exclaimed. "It's not worth answering, Judge. You ought to treat it with silent contempt." From behind his glasses he winked at the reporter with a jocular, intimate smile. He was adapting himself to what he imagined was his company. "Where did you pick up that pipe dream?" he asked.

Without answering, the Southerner regarded him steadily, with inquiring, interested eyes. The doctor coughed nervously, and turned to Judge Gaylor. In the manner of a cross-examination Gaylor called up his next witness.

"Garrett, does any one visit Mr. Hallowell without your knowledge?" he asked. "You may not open the door for him, but you know every one who gets in to see Mr. Hallowell, do you not?"

"Every one, sir."

"Do you admit any mediums, palm-readers, or people of that sort?"

"Certainly not," returned the butler.

"Dr. Rainey," he added, "would not permit it, sir."

Gaylor stamped his foot with impatience.

"Do you admit any one," he demanded, "without Dr. Rainey's permission?"

"No, sir!" The reply could not have rung with greater emphasis. Triumphantly, Gaylor,

with a wave of the hand, as though saying, "Take the witness," turned to Lee. "There you are," he cried. "Now, are you satisfied?"

The reporter moved slowly toward the door. "I am satisfied," he said, "that the man doesn't admit any one without Dr. Rainey's permission."

Indignantly, as though to intercept him, Judge Gaylor stepped forward. Both Rainey and himself spoke together.

"What do you mean by that?" Rainey demanded.

"Are you trying to be insolent, sir?" cried the Judge.

Lee smiled pleasantly. "I had no intention of being insolent," he said. "We *have* the facts —I only came to give you a chance to explain them.

Gaylor lost all patience.

"What facts?" he shouted. "What facts? That mediums come here?"

"Yes," said Lee.

"When?" Gaylor cried. "Tell me that! When?"

Lee regarded the older man thoughtfully.

"Well, to-day is Thursday," he said. "They were here Monday morning, and Tuesday morning—and—the one they call Vera—will be here in half an hour."

Rainey ran across the room, stretching out eager, detaining hands.

"See here!" he begged. "We can fix this!"

"Fix it?" said the reporter. "Not with me, you can't." He turned to the door and found Garrett barring his exit. He halted, fell back on his heels and straightened his shoulders. For the first time they saw how tall he was.

"Get out of my way," he said. The butler hesitated and fell back. Lee walked into the hall.

"I'll leave you gentlemen to fight it out among you," he said. "It's a better story than I thought."

As he descended to the floor below, the men remained motionless. The face of Judge Gaylor seemed to have grown older. When the front door closed, he turned and searched the countenance of each of his companions. The butler had dropped into a chair, muttering, and beating his fist into his open palm.

Gaylor's voice was hardly louder than a whisper. "Is this true?" he asked.

Like a cur dog pinned in a corner, and forced to fight, Rainey snarled at him evilly. "Of course it's true," he said.

"You've let these people see him?" cried Gaylor. "After I forbade it? After I told you what would happen?"

"He would see them," Rainey answered hotly. "'Twas better I chose them, than——"

Gaylor raised his clinched hands and took a sudden step forward. The Doctor backed hastily against the library table. "Don't you come near me!" he stammered. "Don't you touch me."

"And you've lied to me!" cried Gaylor. "You've deceived me. You—you jailbirds—you idiots—" His voice rose hysterically. "And do you think," he demanded fiercely, "I'll help you now?"

"No!" said the butler.

The word caught the Judge in the full rush of his anger. He turned stupidly as though he had not heard aright. "What?" he asked. From the easy chair the butler regarded him with sullen, hostile eyes.

"No!" he repeated, "We don't think you'll help us. You never meant to help us. You've never thought of any one but yourself."

The face of the older man was filled with reproach.

"Jim!" he protested.

"Don't do that!" commanded the butler sharply, "I've told you not to do that."

The Judge moved his head slowly in amazement. The tone of reproach was still in his voice.

"I thought *you* could understand," he said. "It doesn't matter about him. But you! You should have seen what I was doing!"

"I saw what you were doing," the butler replied. "Buying stocks, buying a country place. You didn't wait for him to die. What were we getting?"

With returning courage, Rainey nodded vigorously.

"That's right, all right," he protested. "What were we getting?"

"What were you getting?" demanded Gaylor, eagerly. "If you'd only left him to me, till he signed the new will, you'd have had everything. It only needs his signature."

"Yes," interrupted Garrett contemptuously, "that's all it needs."

"Oh, he'd have signed it!" cried Gaylor. "But what's it worth *now?* Nothing! Thanks to you two, nothing! They'll claim undue influence, they'll claim he signed it under the influence of mediums—of ghosts." His voice shook with anger and distress. "You've ruined me!" he cried. "You've ruined me."

He turned and paced from them, his fingers interlacing, his teeth biting upon his lower lip. The two other men glanced at each other uncomfortably; their silence seemed to assure Gaylor that already they regretted what they had

done. He stood over Garrett, and for an instant laid his hand upon his shoulder. His voice now was sane and cold.

"I've worked three years for this," he said. "And for you, too, Jim. You know that. I've worked on his vanity, on his fear of death, on his damn superstition. When he talked of restitution, of giving the money to his niece, I asked, 'Why?' I said, 'Leave it for a great monument to your memory. Isn't it better that ten million dollars should be spent in good works in your name than that it should go to a chit of a child to be wasted by some fortune hunter? And—then—I evolved the Hallowell Institute, university, hospital, library, all under one roof, all under one direction; and I would have been the director. We should have handled ten millions of dollars! I'd have made you both so rich," he cried, savagely, "that in two years you'd have drunk yourselves into a mad-house. And you couldn't trust me! You've filled this house with fakes and palm-readers. And, now, every one will know just what he is—a senile, half-witted old man, who was clay in my hands, clay in my hands—and you've robbed me of him, you've robbed me of him!" His voice, broken with anger and disappointment, rose in an hysterical wail. As though to meet it a bell rang shrilly. Gaylor

started, and stood with eyes fixed on the door of the bedroom. The three men eyed each other guiltily.

The butler was the first to recover. With mask-like face he hastened noiselessly across the room. In his tones of usual authority, Gaylor stopped him.

"Tell Mr. Hallowell," he directed, "that his niece and District Attorney Winthrop will be here any moment. Ask him if he wishes me to see them, or if he will talk to them himself?"

When the faithful servant had entered the bedroom Gaylor turned to Rainey.

"When do these mediums come to-day?" he asked.

Rainey stared sulkily at the floor.

"I think they're here now—down-stairs," he answered. "Garrett generally hides them there till you're out of the house."

"Indeed," commented Gaylor dryly. "After Winthrop and Miss Coates have gone, I want to talk with your friends."

"Now, see here, Judge," whined Rainey. "Don't make trouble. It isn't as bad as you think. The old man's only investigating——"

"Hush!" commanded the Judge.

From the bedroom, leaning on the butler's arm, Stephen Hallowell came stumbling toward

them, and with a sigh sank into an invalid's chair that was placed for him between the fire and the long library table. He was a very feeble, very old man, with a white face and thin, white hair, but with a mouth and lower jaw as hard and uncompromising as those of a skull. His eyes, which were strangely brilliant and young-looking, peered suspiciously from under ragged white eyebrows. But when they fell upon the Doctor, the eyes became suddenly credulous, pleading, filled with self-pity.

"I'm a very sick man, Doctor," said Mr. Hallowell.

Judge Gaylor bustled forward cheerily. "Nonsense, Stephen, nonsense," he cried; "you look a different man this morning, doesn't he, Doctor?"

"Sure, he does!" assented Rainey. "Little sleep was all he needed." Mr. Hallowell shook his head petulantly. "Not at all!" he protested. "That was a very serious attack. This morning, my head hurts—hurts me to think——"

"Perhaps," said Gaylor, "You'd prefer that I talked to your niece."

"No!" exclaimed the invalid excitedly. "I want to see her myself. I want to tell her, once and for all—" He checked himself, and frowned at the Doctor. "You needn't wait,"

he said. "And Doctor," he added meaningly, "after these people go, you come back."

With a conscious glance at the Judge, Rainey nodded and left them.

"No," continued the old man, "I want to talk to my niece, myself. But I don't want to talk to Winthrop. He's too clever a young man, Winthrop. In the merger case, you remember—had me on the stand for three hours. Made me talk, too." The mind of the old man suddenly veered at a tangent. "How the devil can Helen retain him?" he demanded peevishly. "She can't retain him. She hasn't any money. And he's District Attorney, too. It's against the law. Is he doing it as a speculation? Does he want to marry her?"

Judge Gaylor laughed soothingly.

"Heavens, no!" he said. "She's in his office, that's all. When she took this craze to be independent of you, he gave her a position as secretary, or as stenographer, or something. She's probably told him her story, her side of it, and he's helping her out of charity." The Judge smiled tolerantly. "He does that sort of thing, I believe."

The old man struck the library table with his palm. "I wish he'd mind his own business," he cried. "It's my money. She has no claim to it, never had any claim——"

The Judge interrupted quickly.

"That's all right, Stephen, that's all right," he said. "Don't excite yourself. Just get what you're to say straight in your mind, and stick to it. Remember," he went on, as though coaching a child in a task already learned, "there never was a written agreement."

"No!" muttered Hallowell. "Never was!"

"Repeat this to yourself," commanded the Judge. "The understanding between you and your brother-in-law was that if you placed his patent on the market, for the first five years you would share the profits equally. After the five years, all rights in the patent became yours. It was unfortunate," commented the Judge dryly, "that your brother-in-law and your sister died before the five years were up, especially as the patent did not begin to make money until after five years. Remember—until after five years."

"Until after five years," echoed Mr. Hallowell. "It was over six years," he went on excitedly, "before it made a cent. And, then, it was my money, and anything I give my niece is charity. She's not entitled——"

Garrett appeared at the door. "Miss Coates," he announced, "and Mr. Winthrop." Judge Gaylor raised a hand for silence, and as Mr. Hallowell sank back in his chair, Helen

Coates, the only child of Catherine Coates, his sister, and the young District Attorney of New York came into the library. Miss Coates was a woman of between twenty-five and thirty, capable, and self-reliant. She had a certain beauty of a severe type, but a harassed expression about her eyes made her appear to be always frowning. At times, in a hardening of the lower part of her face, she showed a likeness to her uncle. Like him, in speaking, also, her manner was positive and decided.

In age the young man who accompanied her was ten years her senior, but where her difficulties had made her appear older than she really was, the enthusiasm with which he had thrown himself against those of his own life, had left him young.

The rise of Winthrop had been swift and spectacular. Almost as soon as he graduated from the college in the little "up-State" town where he had been educated, and his family had always lived, he became the prosecuting attorney of that town, and later, at Albany, represented the district in the Assembly. From Albany he entered a law office in New York City; and in the cause of reform had fought so many good fights that on an independent ticket, much to his surprise, he had been lifted to the high position he now held. No more in his

manner than in his appearance did Winthrop suggest the popular conception of his rôle. He was not professional, not mysterious. Instead, he was sane, cheerful, tolerant. It was his philosophy to believe that the world was innocent until it was proved guilty.

He was a bachelor, and, except for two sisters who had married men of prominence in New York, and who moved in a world of fashion into which he had not penetrated, he was alone.

When the visitors entered, Mr. Hallowell, without rising, greeted his niece cordially.

"Ah, Helen! I am glad to see you," he called, and added reproachfully, "at last."

"How do you do, sir," returned Miss Helen stiffly. With marked disapproval she bowed to Judge Gaylor.

"And our District Attorney," cried Mr. Hallowell. "Pardon my not rising, won't you? I haven't seen you, sir, since you tried to get the Grand Jury to indict me." He chuckled delightedly. "You didn't succeed," he taunted.

Winthrop shook hands with him, smiling. "Don't blame *me*," he said. "I did *my* best. I'm glad to see you in such good spirits, Mr. Hallowell. I feared, by the *Despatch*——"

"Lies, lies," interrupted Hallowell curtly. "You know Judge Gaylor?"

As he shook hands, Winthrop answered that the Judge and he were old friends; that they knew each other well.

"Know each other so well!" returned the Judge, "that we ought to be old enemies."

The younger man nodded appreciatively.

"That's true!" he laughed. "Only I didn't think you'd admit it."

With light sarcasm Mr. Hallowell inquired whether Winthrop was with them in his official capacity.

"Oh, don't suggest that!" begged Winthrop. "You'll be having me indicted next. No, sir, I am here without any excuse whatsoever. I am just interfering as a friend of this young lady."

"Good," commented Hallowell. "I'd be sorry to have my niece array counsel against me—especially such distinguished counsel. Sit down, Helen."

Miss Coates balanced herself on the edge of a chair, and spoke in cool, business-like tones. "Mr. Hallowell," she began, "I came——"

"Mr. Hallowell?" objected her uncle.

"Uncle Stephen," Miss Coates again began, "I wish to be as brief as possible. I asked you to see me to-day, because I hoped that by talking things over we might avoid law suits, and litigation——"

Mr. Hallowell nodded his approval. "Yes," he said encouragingly.

"I have told Mr. Winthrop what the trouble is," Miss Coates went on, "and he agrees with me that I have been very unjustly treated——"

"By whom?" interrupted Hallowell.

"By you," said his niece.

"Wait, Helen," commanded the old man. "Have you also told Mr. Winthrop," he demanded, "that I have made a will in your favor? That, were I to die to-night, you would inherit ten millions of dollars? Is that the injustice of which you complain?"

Judge Gaylor gave an exclamation of pleasure. "Good!" he applauded. "Excellent!"

Hallowell turned indignantly to Winthrop. "And did she tell you, also," he demanded, "that for three years I have urged her to make a home in this house? That I have offered her an income as large as I would give my own daughter, and that she has refused both offers. And what's more"—in his excitement, his voice rose hysterically—"by working publicly for her living she has made *me* appear mean and uncharitable, and——"

"That's just it," interrupted Miss Coates. "It isn't a question of charity."

"Will you allow me?" said Winthrop soothingly. "Your niece contends, sir," he ex-

plained, "that this money you offered her is not yours to offer. She claims it belongs to her. That it's what should have been her father's share of the profits on the Coates-Hallowell coupling-pin. But, as you have willed your niece so much money, although half of it is hers already, I advised her not to fight. Going to law is an expensive business.

"But she has found out—and that's what brings me up-town this morning—that you intend to make a new will, and leave all her money and your own to establish the Hallowell Institute. Now," Winthrop continued, with a propitiating smile, "Miss Coates also would like to be a philanthropist, in her own way, with her own money. And she wishes to warn you that, unless you deliver up what is due her, she will proceed against you."

Judge Gaylor was the first to answer.

"Mr. Winthrop," he said, impressively, "I give you my word, there is not one dollar due Miss Coates, except what Mr. Hallowell pleases to give her——"

Miss Coates contradicted him sharply. "That is not so," she said. She turned to her uncle. "You and my father," she declared, "agreed in writing you would share the profits always." Mr. Hallowell looked from his niece to his lawyer. The lawyer, eying him appre-

hensively, nodded. With the patient voice of one who tried to reason with an unreasonable child, Mr. Hallowell began. "Helen," he said, "I have told you many times there never was such an agreement. There was a verbal——"

"And I repeat, I saw it," said Miss Coates.

"When?" asked Hallowell.

"I saw it first when I was fifteen," answered the young woman steadily, "and two years later, before mother died, she showed it to me again. It was with father's papers."

"Miss Coates," asked the Judge, "where is this agreement now?"

For a moment Miss Coates hesitated. Her dislike for Gaylor was so evident, that to make it less apparent, she lowered her eyes. "My uncle should be able to tell you," she said, evenly. "He was my father's executor. But, when he returned my father's papers," she paused; and then, although her voice fell to almost a whisper, continued defiantly, "the agreement was not with them."

There was a moment's silence. To assure himself the others had heard as he did, Mr. Hallowell glanced quickly from Winthrop to Gaylor. He half rose from his chair, and leaned across the table.

"What!" he demanded.

His niece looked at him steadily.

"You heard what I said," she answered.

The old man leaned farther forward.

"So!" he cried, "so! I am not only doing you an injustice, but I am a thief! Mr. Winthrop," he cried, appealingly, "do you appreciate the seriousness of this?"

Winthrop nodded cheerfully. "It's certainly pretty serious," he assented.

"It is so serious," cried Mr. Hallowell, "that I welcome you into this matter. Now, we will settle it once and forever." He turned to his niece. "I have tried to be generous," he cried; "I have tried to be kind, and you insult me in my own house." He pressed the button that summoned the butler from the floor below. "Gentlemen, this interview is at an end. From now on, this matter is in the hands of my lawyer. We will settle this in the courts."

With an exclamation of pleasure that was an acceptance of his challenge, Miss Coates rose.

"That is satisfactory to me," she said. Winthrop turned to Mr. Hallowell.

"Could I have a few minutes' talk with Judge Gaylor now?" he asked. "Not as anybody's counsel," he explained; "just as an old 'enemy' of his?"

"Well, not here," protested the old man querulously. "I'm—I'm expecting some friends here. Judge, take Mr. Winthrop to the draw-

ing-room down-stairs." He turned to Garrett, who had appeared in answer to his summons, and told him to bring Dr. Rainey to the library. The butler left the room, and as Gaylor and Winthrop followed, the latter asked Miss Coates if he might expect to see her at the "Office." She told him that she was now on her way there. Without acknowledging the presence of her uncle, she had started to follow the others, when Mr. Hallowell stopped her.

After they were alone, for a moment he sat staring at her, his eyes filled with dislike and with a suggestion of childish spite. "I might as well tell you," he began, "that after what you said this morning, I will never give you a single dollar of my money."

The tone in which his niece replied to him was no more conciliatory than his own. "You cannot give it to me," she answered, "because it is not yours to give." As though to add impressiveness to what she was about to say, or to prevent his interrupting her, she raised her hand. So interested in each other were the old man and the girl that neither noticed the appearance in the door of Dr. Rainey and the butler, who halted, hesitating, waiting permission to enter.

"That money belongs to me," said Miss Coates slowly, "and as sure as my mother is in

heaven and her spirit is guiding me, that money will be given me."

In the pause that followed, a swift and singular change came over the face of Mr. Hallowell. He stared at his niece as though fascinated. His lower lip dropped in awe. The look of hostility gave way to one of intense interest. His voice was hardly louder than a whisper.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

The girl looked at him uncomprehending. "What do I mean?" she repeated.

"When you said," he stammered eagerly, "that the spirit of your mother was guiding you, what did you mean?"

In the doorway, Rainey and the butler started. Each threw at the other a quick glance of concern.

"Why," exclaimed the girl impatiently, "her influence, her example, what she taught me."

"Oh!" exclaimed the old man he leaned back with an air almost of disappointment.

"When she was alive?" he said.

"Of course," answered the girl.

"Of course," repeated the uncle. "I thought you meant—" He looked suspiciously at her and shook his head. "Never mind," he added. "Well," he went on, cynically, striving to cover up the embarrassment of the moment, "your mother's spirit will probably feel as deep an interest in her brother as in her daughter. We

shall see, we shall see which of us two she is going to help." He turned to Garret and Rainey in the hall. "Take my niece to the door, Garrett," he directed.

As soon as Miss Coates had disappeared, Hallowell turned to Rainey, his face lit with pleased and childish anticipation.

"Well," he whispered eagerly, "is she here?"

Rainey nodded and glanced in the direction opposite to the one Miss Coates had taken. She's been waiting half an hour. And the Professor, too."

"Bring them at once," commanded Mr. Hallowell excitedly. "And then shut the door—and—and tell the Judge I can't see him—tell him I'm too tired to see him. Understand?"

Rainey peered cautiously over the railing of the stairs to the first floor, and then beckoned to some one who apparently was waiting at the end of the hall.

"Miss Vera, sir," he announced. "And Professor Vance."

Although but lately established in New York, the persons Dr. Rainey introduced had already made themselves comparatively well known. For the last six weeks as "head-liners" at one of the vaudeville theatres, and as entertainers at private houses, under the firm name of "The Vances," they had been giving an exhibition of code and cipher signalling. They called it

mind-reading. During the day at the house of Vance and his wife, the girl, as "Vera, the Medium," furnished to all comers memories of the past or news of the future. In their profession, in all of its branches, the man and the girl were past masters. They knew it from the A, B, C of the dream book to the post-graduate work of projecting from a cabinet the spirits of the dead. As the occasion offered and paid best, they were mind-readers, clairvoyants, materializing mediums, test mediums. From them a pack of cards, a crystal globe, the lines of the human hand held no secrets. They found lost articles, cast horoscopes, gave advice in affairs of the heart, of business and speculation, uttered warnings of journeys over seas, and against a smooth-shaven stranger. They even stooped to foretell earthquakes, or caused to drop fluttering from the ceiling a letter straight from the Himalayas. Among those who are the gypsies of the cities, they were the aristocrats of their calling; and to them that calling was as legitimate a business as is, to the roadside gypsy, the swapping of horses. The foreparents of each had followed that same calling, and to the children it was commonplace and matter-of-fact. It held no adventure, no moral obloquy.

"Prof." Paul Vance was a young man of

under forty years. He looked like a fox. He had red eyes, alert and cunning, a long, sharp-pointed nose, a pointed red beard, and red eyebrows that slanted upward. His hair, standing erect in a pompadour, and his uplifted eyebrows, gave him the watchful look of the fox when he hears suddenly the hound baying in pursuit. But no one had ever successfully pursued Vance. No one had ever driven him into a corner from which, either pleasantly or with raging indignation, he was not able to free himself. Seven years before he had disloyally married out of the "profession" and for no other reason than that he was in love with the woman he married. She had come to seek advice from the spirit-world in regard to taking a second husband. After several visits, the spirit-world had advised Vance to advise her to marry Vance.

She did so, and though the man was still in love with his wife, he had not found her, in his work, the assistance he had hoped she might be. She still was a "believer"; in the technical vernacular of her husband, "a dope." Not even the intimate knowledge she had gained behind the scenes could persuade her that Paul, her husband, was not in constant communication with the spirit-world, or that, if he wished, he could not read the thoughts that moved slowly through her pretty head.

At the time of his marriage, the girl Vera, then a child of fourteen, had written to Vance for help. She was ill, without money, and asked for work. To him she was known as the last of a long line of people who had always been professional mediums and spiritualists; and, out of charity, and from a sense of *noblesse oblige* to one of the elect of the profession, Vance had made her his assistant. He had never regretted having done so. The bread cast upon the waters was returned a thousandfold. From the first, the girl brought in money. And his wife, the older of the two, had welcomed her as a companion. After a fashion the Vances had adopted her. In the advertisements she was described as their "ward."

Vera now was twenty-one, tall, wonderfully graceful and of the most enchanting loveliness. Her education had been cosmopolitan. In the largest cities of America she had met persons of every class; young women, old women, mothers with married sons and daughters, women of society as it is exploited in the Sunday supplements; school-girls, shop-girls, factory-girls—all had told her their troubles; and men of every condition had come to scoff and had remained to express, more or less offensively, their admiration. Some of the younger of these, after a first visit, returned the day

following, and each begged the beautiful priestess of the occult to fly with him, to live with him, to marry him. When this happened Vera would touch a button, and "Mannie" Day, who admitted visitors, and later, in the hall, searched their hats and umbrellas for initials, came on the run and threw the infatuated one out upon a cold and unfeeling sidewalk.

So Vera had seen both the seamy side of life, and, in the drawing-rooms where Vance and she exhibited their mind-reading tricks, had been made much of by great ladies and, for an hour as brief as Cinderella's, had looked upon a world of kind and well-bred people. Since she was fourteen, for seven years, this had been her life. A life as open to the public as the life of an actress, as easy of access as that of the stenographer in the hotel lobby. As a result, the girl had incased herself in a defensive armor of hardness and distrust, a protection which was rendered futile by the loveliness of her face, by the softness of her voice, by the deep, brooding eyes, and the fine forehead on which, like a crown, rested the black waves of her hair.

In her work Vera accepted, without question, the parts to which Vance assigned her. When in their mummeries they were successful, she neither enjoyed the credulity of those they had tricked, nor was sobered with remorse. In

the world Vance found a certain number of people with money who demanded to be fooled. It was his business and hers to meet that demand. If ever the conscience of either stirred restlessly, Vance soothed it by the easy answer that if they did not take the money some one else would. It was all in the day's work. It was her profession.

As she entered the library of Mr. Hallowell, which, with Vance, she already had visited several times, she looked like a child masquerading in her mother's finery. She suggested an ingénue who had been suddenly sent on in the rôle of the Russian adventuress. Her slight girl's figure was draped in black lace. Her face was shaded by a large picture-hat, heavy with drooping ostrich feathers; around her shoulders was a necklace of jade, and on her wrists many bracelets of silver gilt. When she moved they rattled. As the girl advanced, smiling, to greet Mr. Hallowell, she suddenly stopped, shivered slightly and threw her right arm across her eyes. Her left arm she stretched out over the table.

"Give me your hand!" she commanded. Dubiously, with a watchful glance at Vance, Mr. Hallowell leaned forward and took her hand.

"You have been ill," cried the girl; "very ill

—I see you—I see you in a kind of faint—very lately." Her voice rose excitedly. "Yes, last night."

Mr. Hallowell protested with indignation. "You read that in the morning paper," he said.

Vera lowered her arm from her eyes and turned them reproachfully on him.

"I don't read the *Despatch*," she answered.

Mr. Hallowell drew back suspiciously. "I didn't say it was the *Despatch*," he returned.

Vance quickly interposed. "You don't have to say it," he explained with glibness; "you thought it. And Vera read your thoughts. You *were* thinking of the *Despatch*, weren't you? Well, there you are! It's wonderful!"

"Wonderful? Nonsense!" mocked Mr. Hallowell. "She did read it in the paper or Rainey told her."

The girl shrugged her shoulders patiently. "If you would rather find out you were ill from the newspapers than from the spirit-world," she inquired, "why do you ask me here?"

"I ask you here, young woman," exclaimed Hallowell, sinking back in his chair, "because I hoped you would tell me something I can't learn from the newspapers. But you haven't been able to do it yet. My dear young lady," exclaimed the old man wistfully, "I *want* to believe, but I must be convinced. No tricks

with me! I can explain how you might have found out everything you have told me. Give me a sign!" He beat the flat of his hand upon the table. "Show me something I can't explain!"

"Mr. Hallowell is quite right, Vera," said Vance. "He is entering what is to him a new world, full of mysteries, and that caution which, in this world, has made him so successful——"

With an exclamation, Hallowell cut short the patter of the showman.

"Yes, yes," he interrupted, petulantly; "I tell you, I want to believe. Convince me."

Considering the situation with pursed lips and thoughtful eyes, Vera gazed at the old man, frowning. Finally she asked, "Have you witnessed our demonstrations of mind-reading?"

Mr. Hallowell snorted. "Certainly not," he replied; "it's a trick!"

"A trick!" cried the girl, indignantly, "to read a man's mind—to see right through your forehead, through your skull, into your brain? Is that a trick?" She turned sharply to Vance. "Show him!" she commanded. "Show him!" She crossed rapidly to the window and stood looking down into the street, with her back to the room.

Vance, with his back turned to Vera, stood close to the table, on the other side of which

Hallowell was reclining in his arm-chair. Vance picked up a pen-holder.

"Think of what I have in my hand, please," he said. "What is this, Vera?" he asked. The girl, gazing from the window at the traffic in the avenue below her, answered with indifference, "A pen-holder."

"Yes, what about it?" snapped Vance.

"Gold pen-holder," Vera answered more rapidly. "Much engraving—initials S. H.—Mr. Hallowell's initials——"

"There is a date, too—can you——"

"December—" Vera hesitated.

"Go on," commanded Vance.

"Twenty-five, one, eight, eight, six; one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six." She moved her shoulders impatiently.

"Oh, tell him to think of something difficult," she said.

From behind Mr. Hallowell's chair Rainey signalled to Vance to take from the table a photograph frame of silver, which held the picture of a woman.

Vance picked it up, holding it close to him.

"What have I here, Vera?" he asked.

Hallowell, seeing what Vance held in his hand, leaned forward. "Put that down!" he commanded. But Vera had already begun to answer.

"A picture, a picture of a young woman. Ask him to think of who it is, and I will tell him."

At the words Mr. Hallowell hesitated, frowned, and then nodded.

"It is his sister," called Vera. "Her name was—I seem to get a 'Catherine'; yes, that's it, Catherine Coates. She is no longer with us. She passed into the spirit-world three years ago." The girl turned suddenly and approached the table, holding her head high, as though offended. "How do you explain that trick?" she demanded.

Mr. Hallowell moved uneasily in his chair. "Oh, the picture's been on my desk each time you've been here," he answered dubiously. "Rainey could have told you."

"As a matter of fact, I didn't," said Rainey.

Hallowell's eyes lightened with interest. "Didn't you?" he asked. He turned to Vera. "If you can read my mind," he challenged—"you," he added, pointing at Vance, "keep out of this, now—tell me of what I am thinking." As Vance drew back, Rainey and himself exchanged a quick glance of apprehension, but the girl promptly closed her eyes, and at once, in a dull, measured tone, began to speak.

"You were thinking you would like to ask a question of some one in the spirit," she recited. "But you are afraid. You do not trust

me. You will wait until I give you a sign, then you will ask that question of some one dear to you, who has passed beyond, and she will answer, and your troubles will be at an end." She opened her eyes and stared at Mr. Hallowell like one coming out of a dream. "What did I say?" she asked. "Was I right?"

Hallowell sank back in his chair, shaking his head.

"Yes," he began grudgingly, "but——"

With an eagerness hardly concealed Vance interrupted.

"What is the question you wish to ask?" he begged.

With a frown of suspicion, Hallowell turned from him to Rainey.

"I don't think I ought to let them know," he questioned, "do you?" But his attention was sharply diverted.

Vera, in a hushed and solemn voice, called for silence.

"My control," she explained—her tone was deep and awestruck—"is trying to communicate with me."

Vance gave an exclamation of concern. The prospect of the phenomena Vera promised seemed to fill him with delightful expectations. "Be very quiet," he cautioned; "do not disturb her."

Deeply impressed, Mr. Hallowell struggled from his chair. Unaided, he moved to below the table and leaning against it looked, with unwilling but fascinated interest, at Vera's uplifted face.

"Some one in the spirit," Vera chanted, in an unemotional, drugged voice, "wishes to speak to Mr. Hallowell. Give me your hand."

"Quick!" directed Vance, "give her your hand. Take her hand."

"Yes, he is here," Vera continued. "A woman has a message for you; she is standing close beside you. She is holding out her arms. And she is trying, so hard, to tell you something. What is it?" the girl questioned. "Oh, what is it? Tell *me*," she begged. "Can't you tell me?"

Hallowell eyed her greedily, waited almost without breathing, for her words. The hand with which he held hers crushed her rings into her fingers.

"What sort?"—whispered the old man—"What sort of a woman?"

With eyes still closed, swaying slightly and with abrupt shudders running down her body, the girl continued in dull, fateful tones.

"She is a fair woman; about forty-five. She is speaking. She calls to you, 'Brother, Brother.'" Vera's voice rose excitedly. "It is

the woman in the picture; your sister! Catherine! I see it written above her head, Catherine. In letters of light." She turned suddenly and fiercely. "Ask her your question!" she commanded. "Ask her your question, *now!*"

By the sudden swaying forward of Vance and Rainey, in the intent look in their eyes, it was evident that a crisis had approached. But Mr. Hallowell, terrified and trembling, shrank back. His voice broke, hysterically. "No, no!" he pleaded. Both anger and disappointment showed in the face of Vance and Rainey; but the girl, as though detached from any human concerns, continued unmoved. "I see another figure," she recited. "A young girl, but she is of this world. I seem to get an H. Yes. Helen, in letters of fire."

"My niece, Helen!" Hallowell whispered hoarsely.

"Yes, your niece," chanted the girl. Her voice rose and thrilled. "And I see much gold," she cried. "Between the two women, heaps of gold. Everywhere I look, I see gold. And, now, the other woman, your sister, is trying to speak to you. Listen! She calls to you, 'Brother!'"

So centred was the interest of those in the room, so compelling the sound of the girl's voice, that, unnoticed, the sliding doors to the

library were slipped apart. Unobserved, Judge Gaylor and Winthrop halted in the doorway. To the Judge, the meaning of the scene was instantly apparent. His face flushed furiously. Winthrop, uncomprehending, gazed unconcerned over Gaylor's shoulder. The voice of Vera rose hysterically to her climax.

"She bids me tell you," Vera cried, "'Tell my brother——'"

Gaylor swept toward her.

"What damned farce is this?" he shouted.

The effect of the interruption was instant and startling. Mr. Hallowell, who, in the last few minutes, had believed he was listening to a voice from the dead, collapsed upon the shoulder of Rainey, who sprang to support him. Like a somnambulist wrenched from sleep, Vera gave a scream of fright, half genuine, half assumed, and swayed as though about to fall. Vance caught her in his arms. He turned on Gaylor, his cunning red eyes flashing evilly.

"You brute!" he cried, "you might have killed her."

Between her sobs, Vera, her head upon the shoulder of Vance, whispered a question. As quickly, under cover of muttered sympathy, Vance answered. "Gaylor. The Judge."

Still slightly swaying, Vera stood upright. She passed her hand vaguely before her eyes.

"Where am I?" she asked feebly. "Where am I?"

Gaylor shook his fist at the girl.

"You know where you are!" he thundered; "and you know where you're going—you're going to jail!"

In the hush that followed, Vera drew herself to her full height. She regarded Gaylor wonderingly, haughtily, as though he were some drunken intruder from the street.

"Are you speaking to me?" she asked.

"Yes, to you," shouted the lawyer. "You're an impostor, and a swindler, and—and——"

Winthrop pushed between them.

"Yes, and she's a woman," he said, briskly; "if you want a row, talk to the man."

To this point, the scene had brought to Vera no emotion save the excitement that is felt by the one who is struggling to escape. The appearance of a champion added a new interest. Through no fault of her own, she had learned by experience that to the one man who annoyed her there always were six to spring to her protection. So the glance she covertly turned upon Winthrop was one less of gratitude than of curiosity.

But at the first sight of him the girl started, her eyes lit with recognition, her face flushed. And then, although the man was in no way

regarding her, her eyes filled, and in mortification and dismay she blushed crimson.

His anger still unsatisfied, Gaylor turned upon Vance.

"And you," he cried, "you're going to jail, too. I'll drive——"

The voice of Mr. Hallowell, shaken with pain and distress, rose feebly, beseechingly. "Henry!" he begged, "I can't stand it!"

"Judge Gaylor!" thundered Rainey, "I won't be responsible if you keep this up."

With an exclamation of remorse, Vera ran to the side of the old man. With Rainey on his other hand, she raised him upright upon his feet.

"Lean on me," begged the girl breathlessly. "I'm very strong. Lean on me."

Mr. Hallowell shook his head. "No, child," he protested, "not you." He turned to his old friend. "You help me, Henry," he begged.

With the authority of the medical man, Rainey waved Vance into the bedroom. "Close those windows," he ordered. "You help me!" he commanded of Gaylor. "Put your arm under him."

Mr. Hallowell, protesting feebly and leaning heavily upon the two men, stumbled into the bedroom, and the door was shut behind him.

For a moment the girl and the man stood in

silence; and then, as though suddenly conscious of her presence, Winthrop turned and smiled.

The girl did not answer his smile. From under the shadow of the picture-hat and the ostrich feathers her eyes regarded him searchingly, watchfully.

For the first time, Winthrop had the chance to observe her. He saw that she was very young, that her clothes cruelly disguised her, that she was only a child masquerading as a brigand, that her face was distractingly lovely. Having noted this, the fact that she had driven several grown men to abuse and vituperation struck him as being extremely humorous; nor did he try to conceal his amusement. But the watchfulness in the eyes of the girl did not relax.

"I'm afraid I interfered with your séance," said the District Attorney.

The girl regarded him warily, like a fencer fixing her eyes on those of her opponent. There was a pause which lasted so long that had the silence continued it would have been rude. "Well," the girl returned at last, timidly, "that's what the city expects you to do, is it not?"

Winthrop laughed. "How did you know who I was?" he asked, and then added quickly, "Of course, you're a mind-reader."

For the first time the girl smiled. Winthrop found it a charming smile, wistful and confiding.

"I don't have to ask the spirit-world," she said, "to tell *me* who is District Attorney of New York."

"Yes," said the District Attorney; "yes, I suppose you have to be pretty well acquainted with some of the laws—those about mediums?"

"If you knew as much about other laws," began Vera, "as I do about the law—" She broke off, and again smiled upon him.

"Then you probably know," said Winthrop, "that what our excited friend said to you just now is legally quite true?"

The smile passed from the face of the girl. She looked at the young man with fine disdain, as a great lady might reprove with a glance the man who snapped a camera at her.

"Yes?" she asked. "Well, what are you going to do about it—arrest me?" Mocking him, in a burlesque of melodrama, she held out her arms. "Don't put the handcuffs on me," she begged.

Winthrop found her impudence amusing; and, with the charm of her novelty, he was conscious of a growing conviction that, somewhere, they had met before; that already at a crisis she had come into his life.

"I won't arrest you," he said, with a puzzled smile, "on one condition."

"Ah!" mocked Vera; "he is generous."

"And the condition is," Winthrop went on seriously, "that you tell me where we met before?"

The girl's expression became instantly mask-like. To learn if he suspected where it was that they had met, she searched his face quickly. She was reassured that of the event he had no real recollection.

"That's rather difficult, isn't it," she continued lightly, "when you consider I've been giving exhibitions of mind-readings for the last six weeks on Broadway, and in the homes of people you probably know?"

"No," Winthrop exclaimed eagerly, "it wasn't in a theatre, and it wasn't in a private house. It was—" he shook his head helplessly, and looked at her for assistance. "You don't know, do you?"

The girl regarded him steadily. "How should I?" she said. And then, as though decided upon a course of action of the wisdom of which she was uncertain, she laughed uneasily.

"But the spirits would know," she said. "I might ask them."

"Do!" cried Winthrop, delightedly. "How much would that be?"

As though to reprove his flippancy, the girl frowned. With a nervous tremor, which this time seemed genuine enough, she threw back her head, closed her eyes, and laid her arm across her forehead.

Winthrop, unobserved, watched her with a smile, partly of amusement, partly on account of her beauty, of admiration.

"I see—a court-room," said the girl. "It is very mean and bare. It is somewhere up the State; in a small town. Outside, there are trees, and the sun is shining, and people are walking in a public park. Inside, in the prisoner's dock, there is a girl. She has been arrested—for theft. She has pleaded 'guilty.' And I see—that she has been very ill—that she is faint from shame—and fear—and lack of food. And there is a young lawyer. He is defending her; he is asking the judge to be merciful, because this is her first offense, because she stole the cloak to get money to take her where she had been promised work. Because this is his *first case*."

Winthrop gave a gasp of disbelief.

"You don't mean to tell me—" he cried.

"Hush!" commanded the girl. "And he persuades the judge to let her go," she continued quickly, her voice shaking, "and he and the girl walk out of the court-house together. And he talks to her kindly, and gives her money

to pay her way to the people who have promised her work."

Vera dropped her arm and, stepping back, faced Winthrop. Through her tears her eyes were flashing proudly, gratefully; the feeling that shook her made her voice vibrate. The girl seemed proud of her tears, proud of her debt of gratitude.

"And I've never forgotten you," she said, her voice eager and trembling, "and what you did for me. And I've watched you come to this city, and fight it, and fight it, until you made them put you where you are." She stopped to control her voice, and smiled at him. "And *that's* why I knew you were District Attorney," she said; "and please—" She fumbled in the mesh purse at her waist and, taking a bill from it, threw it upon the table. "And please, there's the money I owe you, and—and—I thank you—and good-by." She turned and almost ran from him toward the door to the hall.

"Stop!" cried Winthrop.

Poised for flight, the girl halted, and looked back.

"When can I see you again?" said the man. The tone made it less a question than a command.

In a manner as determined as his own, the girl shook her head.

"No!" she said.

"I must!" returned the man.

Again the girl shook her head, definitely, finally.

"It won't help you in your work," she pleaded, "to come to see me."

"I must!" repeated Winthrop, simply.

The eyes of the girl met his, appealingly, defiantly.

"You'll be sorry," said the girl.

Winthrop laughed an eager, boyish laugh. When he spoke the tenseness in his voice had gone. His tone was confident, bantering.

"Then I will not come to see you," he said.

Uncertain, puzzled, Vera looked at him in distress. She thought he was mocking her.

"No?" she questioned.

"I'll come to see Vera, the medium," he explained.

Vera frowned, and then, in happy embarrassment, smiled wistfully.

"Oh, well," she stammered; "of course, if you're coming to consult me professionally — my hours are from four to six."

"I'll be there," cried the District Attorney.

Vera leaned forward eagerly.

"What day will you come?" she demanded.

"What day!" exclaimed the young man indignantly. "Why, *this* day!"

Vera gave a guilty, frightened laugh.

"Oh, will you?" she exclaimed delightedly. She clasped her fingers in a gesture of dismay. "Oh, I *hope* you won't be sorry!" she cried.

For some moments the District Attorney of New York stood looking at the door through which she had disappeared.

PART II

THE home of the Vances was in Thirty-fifth Street, nearly opposite the Garrick Theatre. It was one of a row of old-fashioned brick houses with high steps. As the seeker after truth entered the front hall, he saw before him the stairs to the second story; on his right, the folding doors of the "front parlor," and at the far end of the hall, a single door that led to what was, in the old days, before this row of houses had been converted into offices, the family dining-room. To Vera, the Vances had given the use of this room, as a "reception parlor." The visitor first entered the room on his right, from it passed through another pair of folding doors to the reception parlor, and then, when his audience was at an end, departed by the single door to the hall, and so, to the street.

The reception parlor bore but little likeness to a cave of mystery. There were no shaded lights, no stuffed alligator, no Indian draperies, no black cat. On a table, in the centre, under a heavy and hideous chandelier with bronze gas jets, was a green velvet cushion. On this nestled an innocent ball of crystal. Beside it

lay the ivory knitting needle with which Vera pointed out, in the hand of the visitor, those lines that showed he would be twice married, was of an ambitious temperament, and would make a success upon the stage. In a corner stood a wooden cabinet that resembled a sentry box on wheels. It was from this, on certain evenings, before a select circle of spiritualists, that Vera projected the ghosts of the departed. Hanging inside the cabinet was a silver-gilt crown and a cloak of black velvet, lined with purple silk and covered in gold thread with signs of the zodiac.

Save that these stage properties illustrated the taste of Mabel Vance, the room was of no interest. It held a rubber plant, a red velvet rocking-chair, across the back of which Mrs. Vance had draped a Neapolitan scarf, an upright piano, upon which Emmanuel Day, or, as he was known to the crossroads of Broadway and Forty-second Street, "Mannie" Day, provoked the most marvellous rag-time, an enlarged photograph in crayon of Professor Vance, in a frock coat and lawn tie, a china bull-dog coquettishly decorated with a blue bow, and, on the mantel-piece, two tall beer steins and a hand telephone. From the long windows one obtained a view of the iron shutters of the new department store in Thirty-fourth Street, and

of a garden, just large enough to contain a sumach-tree, a refrigerator, and the packing-case in which the piano had arrived.

After leaving Winthrop, without waiting for Vance, Vera had returned directly to the house in Thirty-fifth Street, and locked herself in her room. And although "Mannie" Day had already ushered two visitors into the front room, Vera had not yet come down-stairs. In consequence, Mabel Vance was in possession of the reception parlor.

Mrs. Vance was plump, pink-and-blond; credulous and vulgar, but at all times of the utmost good-humor. Her admiration for Vera was equalled only by her awe of her. On this particular afternoon, although it already was after five o'clock, Mrs. Vance still wore a short dressing-sack, open at the throat, and heavy with somewhat soiled lace. But her blond hair was freshly "marcelled," and her nails pink and shining. In the absence of Vera, she was making a surreptitious and guilty use of the telephone. From the fact that in her left hand she held the *Morning Telegraph* open at the "previous performances" of the horses, and that the page had been cruelly lacerated by a hat pin, it was fair to suppose that whoever was at the other end of the wire was tempting her with the closing odds at the races.

In her speculations, she was interrupted by "Mannie" Day, who entered softly through the door from the hall.

"Mannie" Day was a youth of twenty-four. It was his heart's desire to be a "Broadwayard." He wanted to know all of those, and to be known only by those, who moved between the giant pillars that New York threw into the sky to mark her progress north.

He knew the soiled White Way as the oldest inhabitant knows the single street of the village. He knew it from the Rathskellers underground to the roof gardens in the sky; in his firmament the stars were the electric advertisements over Long Acre Square, his mother earth was asphalt, the breath of his nostrils gasolene, the *Telegraph* was his Bible. His grief was that no one in the Tenderloin would take him seriously, would believe him wicked, wise, predatory. They might love him, they might laugh with him, they might clamor for his company; in no flat that could boast a piano was he not, on his entrance, greeted with a shout; but the real Knights of the Highway treated him always as the questioning, wide-eyed child. In spite of his after-midnight pallor, in spite of his honorable scars of dissipation, it was his misfortune to be cursed with a smile that was a perpetual plea of "not guilty."

"What can you expect?" an outspoken friend, who made a living as a wireless wire-tapper, had once pointed out to him. "That smile of yours could open a safe. It could make a show-girl give up money! It's an alibi for everything from overspeeding to murder."

Mannie, as he listened, flushed with mortification. From that moment he determined that his life should be devoted to giving the lie to that smile, to that outward and visible sign of kindness, good-will, and innate innocence. As yet, he had not succeeded.

He interrupted Mabel at the telephone to inquire the whereabouts of Vera. "There's two girls in there, now," he said; "waiting to have their fortunes doped."

"Let 'em wait!" exclaimed Mabel. "Vera's up-stairs dressing." In her eyes was the baleful glare of the plunger. "What was that you give me in the third race?"

At the first touch of the ruling passion, what interest Mannie may have felt for the impatient visitors vanished.

"Not in the third," he corrected briskly. "Keene entry win the third."

Mabel appealed breathlessly to the telephone. "What price the Keene entry in the third?" She turned to Mannie with reproachful eyes. "Even money!" she complained.

"That's what I told you," retorted Mannie. He lowered his voice, and gazed apprehensively toward the front parlor. "If you want a really good thing," he whispered hoarsely, "ask Joe what Pompadour is in the fifth!"

Mabel laughed scornfully, disappointedly.

"Pompadour!" she mocked.

"That's right!" cried the expert. "That's the one daily hint from Paris to-day. Joe will give you thirty to one."

Upon the defenseless woman he turned the full force of his accursed smile. "Put five on for me, Mabel?" he begged.

With unexpected determination of character Mabel declared sharply that she would do nothing of the sort.

"Two, then?" entreated the boy.

"Where," demanded Mabel, unfeelingly, "is the twenty you owe me now?"

The abruptness of this unsportsman-like blow below the belt caused Mannie to wince.

"How do *I* know where it is?" he protested. "As long as you haven't got it, why do you care where it is?" He heard the door from the hall open and, turning, saw Vera. He appealed to her. "Vera," he cried, "you'll loan me two dollars? I stand to win sixty. I'll give you thirty."

Vera looked inquiringly at Mabel. "What is it, Mabel," she asked; "a hand book?"

Mrs. Vance nodded guiltily.

"Mannie!" exclaimed Vera, gently but reproachfully, "I told you I wouldn't loan you any more money till you paid Mabel what you've borrowed."

"How can I pay Mabel what I borrowed," demanded Mannie, "if I can't borrow the money from you to pay her? Only *two* dollars, Vera!"

Vera nodded to Mabel.

Mabel, at the phone, called, "Two dollars on Pompadour—to—win—for Mannie Day," and rang off.

"That makes thirty for you," exclaimed Mannie, enthusiastically, "and twenty I owe to Mabel, and that leaves me ten."

Mrs. Vance, no longer occupied in the whirlpool of speculation, for the first time observed that Vera had changed her matronly robe of black lace for a short white skirt, and a white shirt waist. She noted, also, that there was a change in Vera's face and manner. She gave an impression of nervous eagerness, of unrest. Her smile seemed more appealing, wistful, girlish. She looked like a child of fourteen.

But Mabel was concerned more especially with the robe of virgin white.

For the month, which was July, the costume was appropriate, but, in the opinion of Mabel,

in no way suited to the priestess of the occult and the mysterious.

"Why, Vera!" exclaimed Mrs. Vance, "whatever have you got on? Ain't you going to receive visitors? There's ten dollars waiting in there now."

In sudden apprehension, Vera looked down at her spotless garments.

"Don't I look nice?" she begged.

"Of course you look nice, dearie," Mabel assured her, "but you don't look like no fortune-teller."

"If you want to know what you look like," said Mannie sternly, "you look like one of the waiter girls at Childs's, that's what you look like."

"And your crown!" exclaimed Mabel, "and your kimono. Ain't you going to wear your kimono?"

She hastened to the cabinet and produced the cloak of black velvet and spangles, and the silver-gilt crown.

"No, I am *not!*" declared Vera. She wore the frightened look of a mutinous child. "I — I look so—foolish in them!"

Such heresy caused Mannie to gasp aloud:

"You look grand in them," he protested; "don't she, Mabel?"

"Sure she does," assented that lady.

"And your junk?" demanded Mannie, referring to the jade necklace and the gold-plated bracelets. His eyes opened in sympathy. "You haven't pawned them, have you?"

"Pawned them?" laughed Vera; "I couldn't get anything on them!" As the only masculine point of view available, she appealed to Mannie, wistfully. "Don't you like me better this way, Mannie?" she begged.

But that critic protested violently.

"Not a bit like it!" he cried. "Now, in the gold tiara and the spangled opera-cloak," he differentiated, "you look like a picture postal card! You got Lotta Faust's blue skirt back to Levey's. But not in the white goods!" He shook his head sadly, firmly. "You look, now, like you was made up for a May-day picnic in the Bronx, and they'd picked on you to be Queen of the May."

Mabel carried the much-admired opera-cloak to Vera, and held it out, tempting her.

"You'll wear it, just to please me and Mannie, won't you, dearie?" she begged. Vera retreated before it as though it held the germs of contagion.

"I will not," she rebelled. "I hate it! When I have that on, I feel—mean. I feel as mean as though I were picking pennies out of a blind man's hat." Mannie roared with delight.

"Gee!" he shouted; "but that's a hot one."

"Besides," said Vera, consciously, "I'm—I'm expecting some one."

The manner more than the words thrilled Mabel with the most joyful expectations.

She exclaimed excitedly. "A gentleman friend, Vera?" she asked.

That Vera shunned all young men had been to Mabel a source of wonder and of pride. Even when the young men were the friends of her husband and of herself, the preoccupied manner with which Vera received them did not provoke in Mabel any resentment. It rather increased her approbation. Although horrified at the recklessness of the girl, she had approved even when Vera rejected an offer of marriage from a wine agent.

Secretly, for a proper alliance for her, Mabel read the society columns, in search of eligible, rich young men. Finding that they invariably married eligible, rich young women, she had lately determined that Vera's destiny must be an English duke.

Still, if, as she hoped, Vera had chosen for herself, Mabel felt assured that the man would prove worthy, and a good match. A good match meant one who owned not only a runabout but a touring-car.

"It's a man from home," said Vera.

"Home?" queried Mannie.

"From up the State," explained Vera; "from Geneva. It's—Mr. Winthrop."

With an exclamation of alarm, Mannie started upright. "Winthrop!" he cried, then with a laugh of relief he sank back. "Gee! you give me a scare," he cried. "I thought you meant the District Attorney."

Mabel laughed sympathetically.

"I thought so, too," she admitted.

"I *do* mean the District Attorney," said the girl.

"Vera!" cried Mabel.

"Winthrop—coming *here?*" demanded Mannie.

"I met him at Mr. Hallowell's this morning," said Vera. "Didn't Paul tell you?"

"Paul ain't back yet," said Mannie. "I wish he was!" His lower jaw dropped in dazed bewilderment. "Winthrop—coming *here?*" he repeated. "And they're all coming here!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "Paul just phoned me. They've taken Gaylor in with them, and we're all working together now on some game for to-night. And Winthrop's coming *here!*" he shook his head decidedly, importantly. As the only man of the family present, he felt he must meet this crisis. "Paul won't stand for it!" he declared.

"Well, Paul will just have to stand for it!" retorted Mrs. Vance.

With a murmur of sympathy she crossed to Vera. "I'm not going to see our Vera disappointed," she announced. "She never sees no company. Vera, if Mr. Winthrop comes when that bunch is here, I'll show him into the front parlor."

Vera sat down in front of the piano, and let her fingers drop upon the keys. The look of eagerness and anticipation had left her eyes.

"Oh, I don't know," she said, "that I want to see him—now."

With complete misunderstanding, Mannie demanded truculently, "Why not?" His loyalty to Vera gave him courage, in her behalf, to face even a District Attorney. "He doesn't think he's coming here to make trouble for you, does he?"

Vera shook her head, and bending over the piano, struck a few detached chords.

"Oh, no," she said, consciously; "just to see me—professionally—like everybody else."

Mabel could no longer withhold her indignation at the obtuseness of the masculine intellect.

"My gracious, Mannie!" she exclaimed, "can't you understand he's coming here to make a call on Vera—like a gentleman—not like no District Attorney."

Mannie precipitately retreated from his position as champion.

"Sure, I understand," he protested.

With the joy that a match-making mother takes in the hunt, Mabel sank into the plush rocking-chair and, rocking violently, turned upon Vera an eager and excited smile.

"Think of our Vera knowing Mr. Winthrop, socially!" she exclaimed. "It's grand! And they say his sisters are elegant ladies. Last winter I read about them at the opera, and it always printed what they had on. Why didn't you tell me you knowed him, Vera?" she cried reproachfully. "I tell *you* everything!"

"I don't know him," protested the girl. "I used to see him when he lived in the same town."

Mabel, inviting further confidences, ceased rocking and nodded encouragingly. "Up in Geneva?" she prompted.

"Yes," said Vera. "I used to see him every afternoon then, when he played ball on the college nine——"

"Who?" demanded Mannie, incredulously.

"Winthrop," said Vera.

"Did he?" exclaimed Mannie. His tone suggested that he might still be persuaded that there was good in the man.

"What'd he play?" he demanded suspiciously.

"First," said Vera.

"Did he!" exclaimed Mannie. His tone now was of open approbation.

Vera had raised her eyes, and turned them toward the windows. Beyond the soot-stained sumach-tree, the fire-escapes of the department store, she saw the sun-drenched campus, the buttressed chapel, the ancient, drooping elms; and on a canvas bag, poised like a winged Mercury, a tall, straight figure in gray, dusty flannels.

"He was awfully good-looking," murmured the girl, "and awfully tall. He could stop a ball as high as—*that!*" She raised her arm in the air; and then, suddenly conscious, flushed, and turned to the piano.

"Go on, tell us," urged Mabel. "So you first met him in Geneva, did you?"

"No," corrected Vera; "*saw* him there. I—I only *met* him once."

Mannie interrupted hilariously.

"*I* only saw him once, too," he cried; "that was enough for me."

Vera swiftly spun the piano stool, so that she faced him. Her eyes were filled with concern.

"You, Mannie!" she demanded anxiously. "What had you done?"

"Done!" exclaimed Mannie indignantly;

"nothing! What'd you think I'd done? Did you think I was a crook?"

Vera bowed her shoulders, and shivered as though the boy had cursed at her. She shook her head vehemently, and again swung back to the piano. Stumbling awkwardly, her fingers ran over the keys in a swift clatter of broken chords. "No," she whispered; "no, Mannie, no."

With a laugh of delighted recollection, Mannie turned to Mabel.

"He raided a pool room I was working at," he explained. "He picked me out as a sheet writer, because I had my coat off, see? I told him I had it off because it was too hot for me, and he says, 'Young man, if you lie to me, I'll make it a damn sight hotter!'" Mannie threw back his head and shouted uproariously. "He's all right, Winthrop!" he declared.

Mabel, having already married Winthrop to Vera in Grace Church, with herself in the front pew, in a blue silk dress, received this unexpected evidence of his rare wit with delight. In ecstasy of appreciation she slapped her knees.

"Did he say that, Mannie?" she cried. "Wasn't that quick of him! Did you hear what he said to Mannie, Vera?" she demanded.

Their mirth was interrupted by the opening and closing of the front door, and in the hall the murmur of men's voices.

Vance opened the door from the hall and entered, followed by Judge Gaylor and Rainey. With evident pride in her appearance, Vance introduced the two men to his wife, and then sent her and Mannie from the room, the latter with orders to dismiss the visitors in the front parlor and to admit no others.

At the door Mrs. Vance turned to Vera and nodded mysteriously.

"If that party calls," she said with significance, "I'll put him in the front parlor." With a look of dismay Vera vehemently shook her head, but to forestall any opposition Mrs. Vance hastily slammed the door behind her.

In his most courteous manner Judge Gaylor offered the chair at the head of the centre table to Vera, and at the same table seated himself. Vance took a place on the piano stool; Rainey stood with his back to the mantelpiece.

"Miss Vera," Gaylor began, impressively, "I desire to apologize for my language this morning. As Rainey no doubt has told you, I have opposed you and Professor Vance. But I—I know when I'm beaten. Your influence with Mr. Hallowell to-day—is greater than mine. It is paramount. I congratulate you." He smiled ingratiatingly. "And now," he added, "we are all working in unison."

"You've given up your idea of sending me to jail," said Vera.

"Vera!" exclaimed Vance reprovingly. "Judge Gaylor has apologized. We're all in harmony now."

"Is that door locked?" asked Gaylor. Vance told him, save Mrs. Vance, Mannie, and themselves, there was none in the house, and that he might speak freely.

"Miss Vera," began the Judge, "we left Mr. Hallowell very much impressed with the message you gave him this morning. The message from his dead sister. He wants another message from her. He wants her to decide how he shall dispose of a very large sum of money — his entire fortune."

"His entire fortune!" exclaimed Vera. "Do you imagine," she asked, "that Mr. Hallowell will take advice from the spirit-world about *that?* I don't!"

"I do," Gaylor answered stoutly; "I know *I* would."

"You?" asked Vera incredulously.

"If I could believe my sister came from the dead to tell me what to do," said the lawyer, "of course, I'd do it. I'd be afraid not to. But I don't believe. *He* does. And he believes you can bring his sister herself before him. He insists that to-night you hold a séance in his

house, and that you materialize the spirit of his dead sister. So that he can see his sister, and talk with his sister. Vance says you can do that. Can you?"

From Vera's face the look of girlishness, of happy anticipation had already disappeared.

"It is my business to do that," the girl answered. She turned to Vance, and in a matter-of-fact voice inquired, "What does his sister look like—that photograph we used this morning?"

"No," Vance answered. "I've a better one, Rainey gave me. Taken when she was older. Has white hair and a cap and a kerchief crossed —so." He drew his hands across his shoulders. "Rainey, show Miss Vera that picture."

"Not now," Gaylor commanded. "The important thing *now* is that Miss Vera understands the message Mr. Hallowell is to receive from his sister."

The two other men nodded quickly in assent. Gaylor turned to Vera. He spoke slowly, earnestly.

"Miss Vera," he said, "Mr. Hallowell's present will leaves his fortune to his niece. He has made *another* will, which he has not signed, leaving his fortune to the Hallowell Institute. He will ask his sister to *which* of these he should leave his money. You will tell him—" he cor-

rected himself instantly—"she will tell him to give it where it will be of the greatest good to the most people—to the Institute." There was a pause. "Do you understand?" he asked.

"To the Institute. Not to the niece," Vera answered. Gaylor nodded gravely.

"What," asked Vera, "are the fewest words in which that message could be delivered? I mean—should she say, 'You are to endow the Hallowell Institute,' or 'Brother, you are to give—' 'Sign the new will?'" With satisfaction the girl gave a sharp shake of her head, and nodded to Vance. "'Destroy the old will. Sign the new will.' That is the best," she said. "That's it exactly," Gaylor exclaimed eagerly; "that's excellent!" Then his face clouded. "I think," he said, in a troubled voice, "we should warn Miss Vera that to guard himself from any trickery, Mr. Hallowell insists on subjecting her to the most severe tests, he——"

"That will be all right," said the girl. She turned to Vance, and, in a lower tone, but without interest, asked, "What, for instance?" Vance merely laughed and shrugged his shoulders. The girl smiled. Nettled, and alarmed at what appeared to be their overconfidence, Gaylor objected warmly.

"That's all very well," he cried, "but 'for instance,' he insists that the entire time you

are in the cabinet you hold a handful of flour in one hand, and of shot in the other—" He illustrated with clinched fists—"Which makes it impossible," he protested, "for you to use your hands."

The face of the girl showed complete indifference.

"Not necessarily," she said.

"But you are to be tied hand and foot," cried the Judge. "And on top of that," he burst forth indignantly, pointing aggrievedly at Vance, "he, himself, proposed this flour-and-shot test. It was silly, senseless bravado!"

"Not necessarily," repeated the girl. "He knew that I invented it." Rainey laughed. Gaylor gave an exclamation of enlightenment.

"If it will be of any comfort to you, Judge," said Vance, "I'll tell you one thing: every test that ever was put to a medium—was invented by a medium."

Vera rose. "If there is nothing more," she said, "I will go and get the things ready for this evening. 'Destroy the old will. Sign the new will,'" she repeated. She turned suddenly to Vance, her brow drawn in consideration. "I suppose by this new will," she asked, "the girl gets nothing?"

"Not at all!" exclaimed Gaylor, emphatically. "We don't want her to *fight* the will. She gets a million."

"A million dollars?" demanded Vera. For an instant, as though trying to grasp the possibilities of such a sum, she stood staring ahead of her. With doubt in her eyes and shaking her head, she turned to Vance:

"How can one woman spend a million dollars?" she protested.

"Well, you see, we don't intend to starve her," exclaimed Gaylor eagerly, "and at the same time the Institute will be benefiting all humanity. Doing good to——"

Vera interrupted him with a sharp, peremptory movement of the hand.

"We won't go into that, please," she begged.

The Judge inclined his head. "I only meant to point out," he said stiffly, "that you are giving Mr. Hallowell the best advice and doing great good."

For a moment the girl looked at him steadily. On her lips was a faint smile of disdain, but whether for him or for herself the Judge could not determine.

"I don't know that," the girl said finally. "I don't ask." She turned to Rainey. "Have you that photograph?" He gave her a photograph and after, for an instant, studying it in silence, she returned it to him.

"It will be quite easy," she said to Vance. She walked to the door, and instinctively the two men, who were seated, rose.

"I will see you to-night at Mr. Hallowell's," she said, and, with a nod, left them.

"Well," exclaimed Rainey, "you didn't tell her!"

"I know," Vance answered. "I decided we'd be wiser to take advice from my wife. She understands Vera better than I do." He opened the door to the hall, and called, "Mannie! tell Mabel—oh, Mabel," he corrected, "come here a minute." He returned to his seat on the piano stool. "She can tell us," he said.

In expectation of the arrival of Winthrop, Mrs. Vance had arrayed herself in a light-blue frock, and as though she had just come in from the street, in such a hat as she considered would do credit not only to Vera, but to herself.

"Mabel," her husband began, "we're up against a hard proposition. Hallowell insists that Winthrop and Miss Coates must come to the séance to-night."

"Winthrop and Miss Coates!" cried Mabel. In astonishment she glanced from her husband to Rainey and Gaylor. "Then, it's all off!" she exclaimed.

"That's what I say," growled Rainey.

"We want you to tell us," continued Vance, unmoved, "whether Vera should know that now, or wait until to-night?"

"Paul Vance!" almost shrieked his wife.

"Do you mean to tell me you're thinking of giving a materialization in front of the District Attorney? You're crazy!"

"That's what I tell them," chorused Rainey.

Gaylor raised his hand for silence.

"No, Mrs. Vance," he said, wearily. "We are not crazy, but," he added, bitterly, "we can't help ourselves. You mediums have got Mr. Hallowell in such a state that he'll only do what his sister's spirit tells him. He says, if he's robbing his niece, his sister will tell him so; if he's to give the money to the Institute, his sister will tell him that. He says, if Vance is fair and above-board, he shouldn't be afraid to have his niece and any friends of hers present. We can't help ourselves."

"I helped a little," said Vance, "by insisting on having our own friends there—told him the spirit could not materialize unless there were believers present."

"Did he stand for that?" asked Mabel.

"Glad to have them," her husband assured her. "They like to think there are others as foolish as they are. And I'm going to place Mr. District Attorney," he broke out suddenly and fiercely, "between two mediums. They'll hold his hands!"

Already frightened by the possible result of the plot, Rainey with a vehemence born of fear, re-

torted sharply: "Hold his hands! How're you going to make him hold his tongue, afterward?"

Gaylor turned upon him savagely.

"My God, man!" he cried, "we're not trying to persuade the District Attorney that he's seen a ghost. If your friends can persuade Stephen Hallowell that *he's* seen one, the District Attorney can go to the devil!"

"Well, he won't!" returned Rainey; "he'll go to law!"

"Let him!" cried Gaylor defiantly. "Get Hallowell to sign that will, and *I'll* go into court with him."

His bravado was suddenly attacked from an unexpected source.

"You'll go into court with him, all right," declared Mrs. Vance, "all of you! And if you don't want him to catch you," she cried, "you'll clear out, now! He's coming here any minute."

"Who's coming here?" demanded her husband.

"Winthrop," returned his wife, "to see Vera."

"To see Vera!" cried Vance, eagerly. "What about? About this morning?"

"No," protested Mabel, "to call on her. He's an old friend——"

In alarm Rainey pushed into the group of now thoroughly excited people. "Don't you

believe it!" he cried. "If he's coming here, he's coming to give her the third degree——"

The door from the hall suddenly opened, was as suddenly closed, and Mannie slipped into the room. One hand he held up for silence; with the other he pointed at the folding doors.

"Hush!" he warned them. "He's in there! He says, he's come to call on Vera. She says, he's come professionally, and I must bring him in here. I've shut the door into the parlor, and you can slip up-stairs, without his seeing you."

"Up-stairs!" gasped Rainey. "Not for me!" He appealed to Gaylor in accents of real alarm. "We must get away from this house," he declared. "If he finds *us* here—" with a gesture of dismay he tossed his hands in the air. Gaylor nodded. In silence all save Mannie moved into the hall, and halted between the outer and inner doors of the vestibule. Gaylor turned to Vance. "Are you going to tell her," he asked, "that he is to be there to-night?"

"He'll tell her himself, now!"

"No," corrected Rainey; "he doesn't know yet there's to be a séance. Hallowell was writing the note when he left."

"Then," instructed Gaylor, "do not let her know until she arrives, until it will be too late for her to back out."

Vance nodded, and waiting until from the back room he heard the voices of Mannie and Winthrop, he opened the front door and the two men ran down the steps into the street.

While the conspirators were hidden in the vestibule, Mannie had opened the folding doors and invited Winthrop to enter the reception parlor.

"Miss Vera will be down in a minute," he said. "If you want your hand read," he added, pointing, "you sit over there.

As Winthrop approached the centre table Mannie backed against the piano. The presence of the District Attorney at such short range aroused in him many emotions. Alternately he was torn with alarm, with admiration, with curiosity. He regarded him apprehensively with a nervous and unhappy smile.

About the smile there was something that Winthrop found familiar, and, with one almost as attractive, he answered it.

"I think we've met before, haven't we?" he asked pleasantly.

Mannie nodded. "Yes, sir," he answered promptly. "At Sam Hepner's old place, on West Forty-fourth Street."

"Why, of course!" exclaimed the District Attorney.

"Don't you—don't you remember?" stam-

mered Mannie eagerly. He was deeply concerned lest the distinguished cross-examiner should think that from him of his lurid past he could withhold anything. "I had my coat off —and *you* said you'd make it hot for me."

"Did I?" asked Winthrop with an effort at recollection.

"No, you didn't!" Mannie hastened to reassure him. "I mean, you didn't make it hot for me."

Winthrop laughed, and seated himself comfortably beside the centre table. "Well, I'm glad of that," he said. "So our relations are still pleasant, then?" he asked.

"Sure!" exclaimed Mannie heartily. "I mean—yes, sir."

Winthrop mechanically reached for his cigarette case, and then, recollecting, withdrew his hand.

"And how are the ponies running?" he asked.

The interview was filling Mannie with excitement and delight. He chuckled with pleasure. His fear of the great man was rapidly departing. Could this, he asked himself, be the "terror to evil-doers," the man whose cruel questions drove witnesses to tears, whose "third degree" sent veterans of the underworld staggering from his confessional box, limp and gasping?

"Oh, pretty well," said the boy; "seems as if I couldn't keep away from them. I got a good thing for to-day—Pompadour—in the fifth. I put all the money on her I could get together," he announced importantly, and then added frankly, with a laugh, "two dollars!" The laugh was contagious, and the District Attorney laughed with him.

"Pompadour," Winthrop objected, "she's one of those winter-track favorites."

"I know, but to-day," declared Mannie, "she win, sure!" Carried away by his enthusiasm, and by the sympathy of his audience, he rushed, unheeding, to his fate. "If you'd like to put a little on," he said, "I can tell you where you can do it."

The District Attorney stared and laughed. "You mustn't tell *me* where you can do it," he said.

Mannie gave a terrified gasp, and, for an instant, clapped his hands over his lips. "That's right!" he cried. "Gee, that's right! I'm such a crank on all kinds of sport that I clean forgot!"

He gazed at the much-dreaded District Attorney with the awe of the new-born hero-worshipper. "I guess you are, too, hey?" he protested admiringly. "Vera was telling me you used to be a great ball tosser."

In the face of the District Attorney there came a sudden interest. His eyes lightened.

"How did she——"

"She used to watch you in Geneva," said Mannie, "playing with the college lads. I—I," he added consciously, "was a ball player myself once. Used to pitch for the Interstate League." He stopped abruptly.

"Interstate?" said Winthrop encouragingly. "You must have been good."

The enthusiasm had departed from the face of the boy. "Yes," he said, "but—" he smiled shamefacedly, "but I got taking coke, and they—" He finished with a dramatic gesture of the hand as of a man tossing away a cigarette.

"Cocaine?" said the District Attorney.

The boy nodded, and for an instant the two men eyed each other, the boy smiling ruefully. The District Attorney shook his head. "My young friend," he said, "you can never beat *that* game!"

Mannie stared at him, his eyes filled with surprise.

"Don't you suppose," he said, simply, "that I know that better than you do?" With a boy's pride in his own incorrigibility he went on, boastingly: "Oh, yes," he said, "I used to be awful bad! Cocaine and all kinds of dope,

and cigarettes, and whiskey—I was nearly all in—with morphine, it was then—till she took hold of me, and stopped me."

"She?" said Winthrop.

"Vera," said Mannie. "*She* made me stop. I *had* to stop. She started taking it herself."

"What!" cried Winthrop.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mannie, hastily, "I don't mean what you mean—I mean she started taking it to make *me* stop. She says to me, 'Mannie, you're killing yourself, and you got to quit it; and if you don't, every time you take a grain, I'll take two.' And she did! I'd come home, and she'd see what I'd been doing, and she'd up with her sleeves, and—" In horrible pantomime, the boy lifted the cuff of his shirt, and pressed his right thumb against the wrist of his other arm. At the memory of it he gave a shiver, and with a blow roughly struck the cuff into place. "God!" he muttered. "I couldn't stand it. I begged and begged her not. I cried. I used to get down, in this room, on my knees. And each time she'd get whiter, and black under the eyes. And—and I *had* to stop. Didn't I?"

Winthrop moved his head.

"And now," cried the boy with a happy laugh, "I'm all right!" He appealed to the older man eagerly, wistfully. "Don't you think

I'm looking better than I did the last time you saw me?"

Again, without venturing to speak, Winthrop nodded.

Mannie smiled with pride. "Everybody tells me so," he said. "Well, *she* did it. That's what she did for me. And, I can tell you," he said simply, sincerely, "there ain't anything I wouldn't do for her. I guess that's right, hey?" he added.

The eyes of the cruel cross-examiner, veiled under half-closed lids, were regarding the boy with so curious an expression that under their scrutiny Mannie, in embarrassment, moved uneasily. "I guess that's right," he repeated.

To his surprise the District Attorney rose from his comfortable position and, leaning across the table, held out his hand. Mannie took it awkwardly.

"That's all right," he said.

"Sure, it's all right," said the District Attorney.

From the hall there was the sound of light, quick steps, and Mannie, happy to escape from a situation he did not understand, ran to the door.

"She's coming," he said. He opened the door, and as Vera entered he slipped past her and closed it behind him.

Vera walked directly to the chair at the top of the centre table. She was nervous, and she was conscious that that fact was evident. To avoid shaking hands with her visitor, she carried her own clasped in front of her, with the fingers interlaced. She tried to speak in her usual suave, professional tone. "How do you do?" she said.

But Winthrop would not be denied. With a smile that showed his pleasure at again seeing her, he advanced eagerly, with his hand outstretched. "How are *you?*" he exclaimed. "Aren't you going to shake hands with me?" he demanded. "With an old friend?"

Vera gave him her hand quickly, and then, seating herself at the table, picked up the ivory pointer.

"I didn't know you were coming as an old friend," she murmured embarrassedly. "You said you were coming to consult Vera, the medium."

"But *you* said that was the only way I could come," protested Winthrop. "Don't you remember, you said——"

Vera interrupted him. She spoke distantly, formally. "What kind of a reading do you want?" she asked. "A hand reading or a crystal reading?"

Winthrop leaned forward in his chair, frankly

smiling at her. He made no attempt to conceal the pleasure the sight of her gave him. His manner was that of a very old and dear friend who, for the first time, had met her after a separation of years.

"Don't want any kind of a reading," he declared. "I want a talking. You don't seem to understand," he objected, "that I am making an afternoon call." His good-humor was unassailable. Looking up with a perplexed frown, Vera met his eyes and saw that he was laughing at her. She threw the ivory pointer down and, leaning back in her chair, smiled at him.

"I don't believe," she said doubtfully, "that I know much about afternoon calls. What would I do if we were on Fifth Avenue? Would I give you tea?" she asked, "because," she added hastily, "there isn't any tea."

"In that case it is not etiquette to offer any," said Winthrop gravely.

"Then," said Vera, "I'm doing it right, so far?"

They both laughed; Vera because she still was in awe of him, and Winthrop because he was happy.

"You're doing it charmingly," Winthrop assured her.

"Good!" exclaimed Vera. "Well, now," she inquired, "now we talk, don't we?"

"Yes," assented Winthrop promptly, "we talk about you."

"No, I—I don't think we do," declared Vera, in haste. "I think we talk about Geneva." She turned to him with real interest. "Is the town much changed?" she asked.

As though preparing for a long talk, Winthrop dropped his hat to the floor and settled himself comfortably. "Well, it is, and it isn't," he answered. "Haven't you been back lately?" he asked.

Vera looked quickly away from him.

"I have never been back!" she answered. There was a pause and when she again turned her eyes to his, she was smiling. "But I always take the Geneva *Times*," she said, "and I often read that you've been there. You're a great man in Geneva."

Winthrop nodded gravely.

"Whenever I want to be a great man," he said, "I go to Geneva."

"Why, yes," exclaimed Vera. "Last June you delivered the oration to the graduating class," she laughed, "on 'The College Man in Politics.' Such an original subject! And did you point to yourself?" she asked mockingly, "as the—the bright example?"

"No," protested Winthrop. "I knew they'd see that."

Much to her relief, Vera found that of Winthrop she was no longer afraid.

"Oh!" she protested, "didn't you say, 'Twelve years ago a humble boy played ball for Hobart College. That boy now stands before you'? Didn't you say that?"

"Something like that," assented the District Attorney. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "that young man who showed me in here, your confederate, or fellow-conspirator, or lookout man, or whatever he is—told me you used to be a regular attendant at those games."

"I never missed one!" Vera cried. She leaned forward, her eyes shining, her brows knit with the effort of recollection.

"I used to tell aunt," she said, "I had to drive in for the mail. But that was only an excuse. Aunt had an old buggy, and an old white horse, called Roscoe Conkling. I called him 'Rocks.' He was blind in one eye, and he would walk on the wrong side of the road; you had to drive him on one rein." The girl was speaking rapidly, eagerly. She had lost all fear of her visitor. With satisfaction Winthrop recognized this, and unconsciously he was now frankly regarding the face of the girl with a smile of pleasure and admiration.

"And I used to tie him to the fence just opposite first base," Vera went on, excitedly, "and shout—for you!"

"Don't tell me," interrupted Winthrop, in burlesque excitement, "that you were that very pretty little girl, with short dresses and long legs, who used to sit on the top rail and kick and cheer."

Vera shook her head sternly.

"I was," she said, "but *you* never saw me."

"Oh, yes, we did," protested Winthrop. "We used to call you our mascot."

"No; that was some other little girl," said Vera firmly. "You never looked at *me*, and I"— she laughed, and then frowned at him reproachfully—"I thought you were—magnificent! I used to have your pictures in baseball clothes pinned all around my looking-glass. And whenever you made a base hit, I'd shout and shout—and you'd never look at me! And one day—" She stopped, and as though appalled by the memory, clasped her hands. "Oh, it was awful!" she exclaimed. "One day a foul ball hit the fence, and I jumped down and threw it to you, and *you* said, 'Thank you, sis!' And I," she cried, "thought I was a young lady!"

"Oh! I couldn't have said that," protested Winthrop. "Maybe I said 'sister.'"

"No," declared Vera, energetically shaking her head, "not 'sister'; 'sis.' And you never *did* look at me; and I used to drive past your house every day. We lived only a mile below you."

"Where?" asked Winthrop.

"On the lake road from Syracuse," said Vera. "Don't you remember the farm a mile below yours—the one with the red barn right on the road? Yes, you do," she insisted. "The cows were always looking over the fence right into the road."

"Of course!" exclaimed Winthrop delightedly. "Was that your house?"

"Oh, no," protested Vera. "Ours was the little cottage on the other side——"

"With poplars round it?" demanded Winthrop.

"That's it!" cried Vera triumphantly; "with poplars round it."

"Why, I know that house well. We boys used to call it the haunted house."

"That's the one," assented Vera. She smiled with satisfaction. "Well, that's where I lived until aunt died," she said.

"And then, what?" asked Winthrop.

For a moment the girl did not answer. Her face had grown grave and she sat motionless, staring beyond her. Suddenly, as though casting her thoughts from her, she gave a sharp toss of her head.

"Then," she said, speaking quickly, "I went into the mills, and was ill there, and I wrote Paul and Mabel to ask if I could join them, and

they said I could. But I was too ill, and I had no money—nothing. And, then," she raised her eyes to his and regarded him steadily—"then I stole that cloak to get the money to join them, and you—you helped me to get away, and—and——"

Winthrop broke in hastily. He disregarded both her manner and the nature of what she had said.

"And how did you come to know the Vances?" he asked.

After a pause of an instant, the girl accepted the cue his manner gave her, and answered as before.

"Through my aunt," she said. "*She* was a medium, too."

"Of course!" cried Winthrop. "I remember now. *That's* why we called it the haunted house."

"My aunt," said the girl, regarding him steadily and with, in her manner, a certain defiance, "was a *great* medium. All the spiritualists in that part of the State used to meet at our house. I've witnessed some wonderful manifestations in that front parlor." She turned to Winthrop and smiled. "So, you see," she exclaimed, "I was born and brought up in this business. I am the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter. My grandmother was a medium, my

mother was a medium—she worked with the Fox sisters before they were exposed. But my aunt," she added thoughtfully, judicially, "was the greatest medium I have ever seen. She did certain things *I* couldn't understand, and I know every trick in the trade—unless," she explained, "you believe the spirits helped her."

Winthrop was observing the girl intently, with a new interest.

"And you don't believe that?" he asked, quietly.

"How can I?" Vera said. "I was brought up with them." She shook her head and smiled. "I used to play around the kitchen stove with Pocahontas and Alexander the Great, and Martin Luther lived in our china closet. You see, the neighbors wouldn't let their children come to our house—so, the only playmates I had—were ghosts." She laughed wistfully. "My!" she exclaimed, "I was a queer, lonely little rat. I used to hear voices and see visions. I do still," she added. With her elbows on the arms of her chair, she clasped her hands under her chin and leaned forward. She turned her eyes to Winthrop and nodded confidentially.

"Do you know," she said, "sometimes I think people from the other world *do* speak to me."

"But you said," Winthrop objected, "you didn't believe."

"I know," returned Vera. "I can't!" Her voice was perplexed, impatient. "Why, I can sit in this chair," she declared earnestly, "and fill this room with spirit voices and rappings, and you sitting right there can't see how I do it. And yet, in *spite* of all the tricks, sometimes I believe there's something in it."

She looked at Winthrop, her eyes open with inquiry. He shook his head.

"Yes," insisted the girl. "When these women come to me for advice, I don't invent what I say to them. It's as though something told me what to say. I have never met them before, but as soon as I pass into the trance state I seem to know all their troubles. And I seem to be half in this world and half in another world—carrying messages between them. Maybe," her voice had sunk to almost a whisper; she continued as though speaking to herself, "I only *think* that. I don't know. I wonder."

There was a long pause.

"I wish," began Winthrop earnestly, "I wish you were younger, or I were older."

"Why?" asked Vera.

"Because," said the young man, "I'd like to talk to you—like a father."

Vera turned and smiled on him, securely, with frank friendliness. "Go ahead," she assented; "talk to me like a father."

Winthrop smiled back at her, and then frowned. "You shouldn't be in this business," he said.

The girl regarded him steadily.

"What's the matter with the business?" she asked.

Winthrop felt she had put him upon the defensive, but he did not hesitate.

"Well," he said, "there *may* be some truth in it. But we don't know that. We do know that there's a lot of fraud and deceit in it. Now," he declared warmly, "there's nothing deceitful about you. You're fine," he cried enthusiastically, "you're big! That boy who was in here told me one story about you that showed——"

Vera stopped him sharply.

"What do you know of me?" she asked bitterly. "The first time you ever saw me, I was in a police court; and this morning—you heard that man threaten to put me in jail——"

In turn, by abruptly rising from his chair, Winthrop interrupted her. He pushed the chair out of his way, and, shoving his hands into his trousers pockets, began pacing with long, quick strides up and down the room. "What do I care for that!" he cried contemptuously. He tossed the words at her over his shoulder. "I put lots of people in jail myself that are better

than I am. Only, they won't play the game." He halted, and turned on her. "Now, you're not playing the game. This is a mean business; taking money from silly girls and old men. You're too good for that." He halted at the table and stood facing her. "I've got two sisters uptown," he said—he spoke commandingly, peremptorily—"and to-morrow I am going to take you to see them. And we fellow-townsmen," he smiled at her appealingly, "will talk this over, and we'll make you come back to your own people."

For a moment the two regarded each other. Then the girl answered firmly but with a slight hoarseness in her voice, and in a tone hardly louder than a whisper:

"You know I can't do that!"

"I don't!" blustered Winthrop. "Why not?"

"Because," said the girl steadily, "of what I did in Geneva."

As though the answer was the one he had feared, the man exclaimed sharply, rebelliously.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "You didn't know what you were doing. No decent person would consider that."

"They do," said the girl; "they are the very ones who do. And—it's been in the papers.

Everybody in Geneva knows it. And here, too. And whenever I try to get away from this"—she stretched out her hands to include the room about her—"*some one tells!* Five times, now." She leaned forward appealingly, not as though asking pity for herself, but as wishing him to see her point of view. "I didn't choose this business," she protested; "I was sort of born in it, and," she broke out, loyally, "I hate to have you call it a mean business; but I can't get into any other. Whenever I have, some man says, 'That girl in your front office is a thief.'" The restraint she put upon herself, the air of disdain which at all times she had found the most convenient defense, fell from her.

"It's not fair!" she cried; "it's not fair." To her mortification, the tears of self-pity sprang to her eyes, and as she fiercely tried to brush them away, to her greater anger, continued to creep down her cheeks. "It was nine years ago," she protested; "I was a child. I've been punished enough." She raised her face frankly to his, speaking swiftly, bitterly.

"Of course, I want to get away!" she cried. "Of course, I want friends. I've never had a friend. I've *always* been alone. I'm tired, tired! I hate this business. I never know how much I hate it until the chance comes to get away—and I can't."

She stopped, but without lowering her head or moving her eyes from his.

"This time," said the man quietly, "you're going to get away from it."

"I can't," repeated the girl. "*You* can't help me!"

Winthrop smiled at her confidently.

"I'm going to try," he said.

"No, please!" begged the girl. Her voice was still shaken with tears. She motioned with her head toward the room behind her.

"These are my people," she declared defiantly, as though daring him to contradict her. "And they are good people! They've tried to be good friends to me; and they've been true to me."

Winthrop came toward her and stood beside her, so close that he could have placed his hand upon her shoulder. He wondered, whimsically, if she knew how cruel she seemed in appealing with her tears, her helplessness and loveliness to what was generous and chivalric in him; and, at the same time, by her words, treating him as an interloper and an enemy.

"That's all right," he said gently. "But that doesn't prevent my being a good friend to you, too, does it? Or," he added, his voice growing tense and conscious—"my being true to you? My sisters will be here to-morrow," he announced briskly.

Vera had wearily dropped her arms upon the table and lowered her head upon them. From a place down in the depths, she murmured a protest.

"No," contradicted Winthrop cheerfully, "this time you are going to win. You'll have back of you, if I do say it, two of the best women God ever made. Only, now, you must do as I say." There was a pause. "Will you?" he begged.

Vera raised her head slowly, holding her hand across her eyes. There was a longer silence, and then she looked up at him and smiled, pathetically, gratefully, and nodded.

"Good!" cried Winthrop. "No more spooks," he laughed, "no more spirit rappings."

Through her tears Vera smiled up at him a wan, broken smile. She gave a shudder of distaste. "Never!" she whispered. "I promise." Their eyes met, the girl's looking into his shyly, gratefully; the man's searching hers eagerly. And suddenly they saw each other with a new and wonderful sympathy and understanding. Winthrop felt himself bending toward her. He was conscious that the room had grown dark, and that he could see only her eyes. "You must be just yourself," he commanded, but so gently, so tenderly, that, though he did not know it, each word carried with it the touch of a caress—"just your sweet, fine, noble self!"

Something he read in the girl's uplifted eyes made him draw back with a shock of wonder, of delight, with an upbraiding conscience. To pull himself together, he glanced quickly about him. The day had really grown dark. He felt a sudden desire to get away, to go where he could ask himself what had happened, what it was that had filled this unknown, tawdry room with beauty and given it the happiness of a home.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed nervously, "I had no idea I'd stayed so long. You'll not let me come again. Good-by—until to-morrow." He turned, holding out his hand, and found that again the girl had dropped her face upon her arm, and was sobbing quietly, gently.

"Oh, what is it?" cried Winthrop. "What have I said?" The catch in the girl's voice as she tried to check the sobs wrenched his heart. "Oh, please," he begged; "I've said something wrong? I've hurt you?" With her face still hidden in her arms, the girl shook her head.

"No, no!" she sobbed. Her voice, soft with tears, was a melody of sweet and tender tones. "It's only—that I've been so lonely—and you've made me happy, happy!"

The sobs broke out afresh, but Winthrop, now knowing that they brought to the girl peace, was no longer filled with dismay.

Her head was bent upon her left arm, her

right hand lightly clasped the edge of the table. With the intention of saying farewell, Winthrop took her hand in his. The girl did not move. To his presence she seemed utterly oblivious. In the gathering dusk he could see the bent figure, could hear the soft, irregular breathing as the girl wept gently, happily, like a child sobbing itself to sleep. The hand he held in his neither repelled nor invited, and for an instant he stood motionless, holding it uncertainly. It was so delicate, so helpless, so appealing, so altogether lovable. It seemed to reach up, and, with warm, clinging fingers, clutch the tendrils of his heart.

Winthrop bent his head suddenly, and lifting the hand, kissed it; and then, without again speaking, walked quickly into the hall and shut the door. In the room the dusk deepened. Through the open windows came the roar of the Sixth Avenue Elevated, the insistent clamor of an electric hansom, the murmur of Broadway at night. The tears had suddenly ceased, but the girl had not moved. At last, slowly, stiffly, she raised her head. Her eyes, filled with wonder, with amazement, were fixed upon her hand. She glanced cautiously about her. Assured she was alone, with her other hand she lifted the one Winthrop had kissed and held it pressed against her lips.

The folding doors were thrown open, letting in a flood of light, and Mabel Vance, entering swiftly, knelt at the table and bent her head close to Vera.

"That woman's in the hall," she whispered, "that niece of Hallowell's. Paul and Mannie can't get rid of her. Now she's got hold of Winthrop. She says she *will* see you. Be careful!"

Vera rose. That Mabel might not see she had been weeping, she walked to the piano, covertly drying her eyes.

"What," she asked dully, "does she want with me?"

"About to-night," answered Mabel. She exclaimed fiercely, "I told them there'd be trouble!"

With Vance upon her heels, Helen Coates came in quickly from the hall. Her face was flushed, her eyes lit with indignation and excitement. In her hand she held an open letter.

As though to protect Vera, both Vance and his wife moved between her and their visitor, but, disregarding them, Miss Coates at once singled out the girl as her opponent.

"You are the young woman they call Vera, I believe," she said. "I have a note here from Mr. Hallowell telling me you are giving a

séance to-night at his house. That you propose to exhibit the spirit of my mother. That is an insult to the memory of my mother and to me, and I warn you, if you attempt such a thing, I will prevent it."

There was a pause. When Vera spoke it was in the tone of every-day politeness. Her voice was even and steady.

"You have been misinformed," she said. "There will be no séance to-night."

Vance turned to Vera, and, in a voice lower than her own, but sufficiently loud to include Miss Coates, said: "I don't think we told you that Mr. Hallowell himself *insists* that this lady and her friends be present."

"Her presence makes no difference," said Vera quietly. "There will be no séance to-night. I will tell you about it later, Paul," she added. She started toward the door, but Miss Coates moved as though to intercept her.

"If you think," she cried eagerly, "you can give a séance to Mr. Hallowell without my knowing it, you are mistaken."

Vera paused, and made a slight inclination of her head.

"That was not my idea," she said. She looked appealingly to Vance. "Is that not enough, Paul?" she asked.

"Quite enough!" exclaimed the man. He

turned to the visitor and made a curt movement of the hand toward the open door.

"There *will* be a séance to-night," he declared. "*At* Mr. Hallowell's. If you wish to protest against it, you can do so there. This is my house. If you have finished—" He repeated the gesture toward the open door.

"I have not finished," said Miss Coates sharply; "and if you take my advice, you will follow *her* example." With a nod of the head she signified Vera. "When she sees she's in danger, she knows enough to stop. This is not a question of a few medium's tricks," she cried, contemptuously. "I know *all* that you planned to do, and I intend that to-morrow every one in New York shall know it too."

Like a cloak Vera's self-possession fell from her. In alarm she moved forward.

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"I have had you people followed pretty closely," said Miss Coates. Her tone was assured. She was confident that of those before her she was the master, and that of that fact they were aware.

"I know," she went on, "just how you tried to impose upon my uncle—how you tried to rob *me*, and to-night I have invited the reporters to my house to give them the facts."

With a cry Vera ran to her.

"No!" she begged, "you won't do that. You must not do that!"

"Let her talk!" growled Vance. "Let her talk! She's funny."

"No!" commanded Vera. Her voice rang with the distress. "She cannot do that!" She turned to Miss Coates. "We haven't hurt you," she pleaded; "we haven't taken your money. I promise you," she cried, "we will never see Mr. Hallowell again. I beg of you——"

Vance indignantly caught her by the arm and drew her back. "You don't beg nothing of her!" he cried.

"I do," Vera answered wildly. She caught Vance's hand in both of hers. "I have a chance, Paul," she entreated; "don't force me through it again. I can't stand the shame of it again." Once more she appealed to the visitor. "Don't!" she begged. "Don't shame me."

But the eyes of the older girl, blind to everything save what, as she saw it, was her duty, showed no consideration.

Vera's hands, trembling on his arm, drove Vance to deeper anger. He turned savagely upon Miss Coates.

"You haven't lost anything yet, have you?" he demanded. "She hasn't hurt you, has she? If it's revenge you want," he cried in-

solently, "why don't you throw vitriol on the girl?"

"Revenge!" exclaimed Miss Coates indignantly. "It is my duty. My public duty. I'm not alone in this; I am acting with the District Attorney. It is our duty." She turned suddenly and called, "Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Winthrop!"

For the first time Vera saw, under the gas jet, at the farther end of the hall, the figures of Mannie and Winthrop.

"No, no!" she protested. "I beg of you," she cried hysterically. "I've got a chance. If you print this thing to-morrow, I'll never have a chance again. Don't take it away from me." Impulsively her arms reached out in an eager final appeal. "I'm down," she said simply; "give me a chance to get up."

When Miss Coates came to give battle to the Vances, she foresaw the interview might be unpleasant. It was proving even more unpleasant than she had expected, but her duty seemed none the less obvious.

"You should have thought of that," she said, "before you were found out."

For an instant Vera stood motionless, staring, unconsciously holding the attitude of appeal. But when, by these last words, she recognized that her humiliation could go no further,

with an inarticulate exclamation she turned away.

"The public has the right to know," declared Miss Coates, "the sort of people you are. I have the record of each of you——"

From the hall Winthrop had entered quickly, but, disregarding him, Vance broke in upon the speaker, savagely, defiantly.

"Print 'em, then!" he shouted. "Print 'em!"

"I mean to!" declared Miss Coates. "Yours, and hers, she——"

Winthrop placed himself in front of her, shutting her off from the others. He spoke in an earnest whisper:

"Don't!" he begged. "She has asked for a chance. Give her a chance."

Miss Coates scorned to speak in whispers.

"She has had a chance," she protested loudly. "She's had a chance for nine years; and she's *chosen* to be a charlatan and a cheat, and—" The angry woman hesitated, and then flung the word—"and a thief!"

In the silence that followed no one turned toward Vera; but as it continued unbroken each raised his eyes and looked at her.

They saw her drawn to her full height, the color flown from her face, her deep, brooding eyes flashing. She was like one by some re-

ligious fervor lifted out of herself, exalted. When she spoke her voice was low, tense. It vibrated with tremendous, wondering indignation.

"Do you know *who* I am?" she asked. She spoke like one in a trance. "Do you know *who* you are threatening with your police and your laws? I am a priestess! I am a medium between the souls of this world and the next. I am Vera—the Truth! And I mean—" the girl cried suddenly, harshly, flinging out her arm, "that you shall hear the truth! To-night I will bring your mother from the grave to speak it to you!"

With a swift, sweeping gesture, she pointed to the door. "Take those people away!" she cried.

The eyes of Winthrop were filled with pity.

"Vera!" he said. "Vera!"

For an instant, against the tenderness and reproach in his voice the girl held herself motionless; and then falling upon the shoulder of Mrs. Vance, burst into girlish, heart-broken tears.

"Take them away," she sobbed. "Take them away!"

Mannie Day and Vance closed in upon the visitors, and motioning them before them, drove them from the room.

PART III

THE departure of the District Attorney and Miss Coates, left Vera free to consider how serious, if she carried out her threat, the consequences might be. But of this chance she did not avail herself. Instead, with nervous zeal, she began to prepare for her masquerade. It was as though her promise to Winthrop to abandon her old friends had filled her with remorse, and that she now, by an extravagance of loyalty, was endeavoring to make amends.

At nine o'clock, with the Vances, she arrived at the house of Mr. Hallowell. Already, to the same place, a wagon had carried the cabinet, a parlor organ, and a dozen of those camp-chairs that are associated with house weddings and funerals; and while, in the library, Vance and Mannie arranged these to their liking, on the third floor Vera, with Mrs. Vance, waited for that moment to arrive when Vance considered her entrance would be the most effective.

This entrance was to be made through the doorway that opened from the hall on the second story into the library. To the right of this door, in an angle of two walls, was the cabi-

net, and on the left the first of the camp-chairs. These had been placed in a semicircle that stretched across the room and ended at the parlor organ. The door from Mr. Hallowell's bedroom opened directly upon the semicircle at the point most distant from the cabinet. In the centre of the semicircle Vance had placed the invalid's arm-chair.

Vance, in his manner as professional and undisturbed as a photographer focussing his camera and arranging his screens, was explaining to Judge Gaylor the setting of his stage. The judge was an unwilling audience. Unlike the showman, for him the occasion held only terrors. He was driven by misgivings, swept by sudden panics. He scowled at the cabinet, intruding upon the privacy of the room where for years, without the aid of accessories, by his brains alone, he had brought Mr. Hallowell almost to the point of abject submission to his wishes. He turned upon Vance with bitter self-disgust.

"So, I've got down as low as this, have I?" he demanded.

Vance heard him, undisturbed.

"I must ask you," he said, briskly, "to help me keep the people just as I seat them. They will be in this half-circle facing the cabinet and holding hands. Those we know are against us,"

he explained, "will have one of my friends, Professor Strombergk, or Mrs. Marsh, or my wife, on each side of him. If there should be any attempt to rush the cabinet—we must get there first. I will be outside the cabinet working the rappings, the floating music, and the astral bodies." At the sight of the expression these words brought to the face of Gaylor, Vance permitted himself the shadow of a smile. "I can take care of myself," he went on, "but remember—Vera must not be caught outside the cabinet! When the lights go up, she must be found with the ropes still tied."

Gaylor turned from him with an exclamation of disgust.

"Pah!" he muttered. "It's a hell of a business!"

Vance continued unmoved. "And, another thing," he said, "about these lights; this switch throws them all off, doesn't it?" He pressed a button on the left of the door, and the electric lights in the walls and under a green shade on the library table faded and disappeared, leaving the room, save for the light from the hall, in darkness.

"That's the way we want it," said the showman.

From the hall Mannie appeared between the curtains that hung across the doorway. "What

are you doing with the lights?" he demanded. "You want to break my neck? All our people are down-stairs," he announced.

Vance turned on the lights. At the same moment Rainey came from the bedroom into the library. It was evident that to sustain his courage he had been drinking. He made no effort to greet those in the room, but stood, glaring resentfully at the cabinet and the row of chairs.

"Well," exclaimed Vance cheerfully, "if our folks are all here, we're all right."

Glancing behind him, Mannie took Vance by the sleeve, and led him to the centre of the room.

"No, we're not all right," said the boy; "that Miss Coates has brought a friend with her. She says Hallowell told her she could bring a friend. She says this young fellow is her friend. I think he's a Pink!"

"What nonsense," exclaimed Gaylor in alarm. "No detective would force his way into this house."

"She says," continued Mannie, disregarding Gaylor, and still addressing Vance, "'he's a seeker after the Truth.' I'll bet," declared the boy, violently, "he's a seeker after the truth!"

Garrett came hastily and noiselessly into the room. He nodded toward Mannie.

"Has he told you?" he asked.

"Yes," Gaylor answered, "who is he?"

"The reporter who was here this morning," Garrett returned. "The one who threatened——"

"That'll do," commanded Gaylor. In the face of this new complication he again became himself. Suavely and politely he turned to Vance: "Will you and your friend join Miss Vera," he asked, "and tell her that we begin in a few minutes?"

For the first time, aggressively and offensively, Rainey broke his silence.

"No, we won't begin in a few minutes," he announced. "Not by a damned sight!"

The explosion was so unexpected that, for an instant, while the eyes of all were fixed in astonishment upon the speaker, there was complete silence. Gaylor, still suave, still polite, looked toward Vance, and motioned him to the door.

"Will you kindly do as I ask?" he said. With Mannie at his side, Vance walked quickly from the room. Once in the hall, the boy laid a detaining hand upon the arm of the older man.

"If you'll take my advice, which you won't," he said, "we'll all cut and run *now*, while we got the chance!"

In the library Gaylor turned savagely upon his fellow-conspirator.

"Well!" he demanded.

Rainey frowned at him sulkily. "I wash my hands of the whole thing!" he cried.

Gaylor dropped his voice to a whisper. "What are you afraid of now?" he demanded. "If you're not afraid of a district attorney, why are you afraid of a reporter?"

"I'm not afraid of anybody," returned Rainey, thickly. "But I don't mean to be a party to no murder!" He paused, shaking his head portentously. "That man in there," he whispered, nodding toward the bedroom, "is in no condition to go through this. After that shock this morning, and last night—it'll kill him. His heart's rotten, I tell you, rotten!"

Garrett snarled contemptuously.

"How do you know?" he demanded.

"How do I know?" returned Rainey, fiercely. "I was four years in a medical college, when you were in jail, you——"

"Stop that!" cried Gaylor. Glancing fearfully toward the open door, he interposed between them.

"Don't take my advice, then," cried Rainey. "Go on! Kill him! And he won't sign your will. Only, don't say I didn't tell you."

"Have you told *him?*" demanded Gaylor.

"Yes," Rainey answered stoutly. "Told him if he didn't stop this, he wouldn't live till morning."

"Are *we* forcing him to do this?" demanded Gaylor. "No! he's forcing it on us. My God!" he exclaimed, "do you think I want this farce? You say, yourself, you told him it would kill him, and he will go on with it. Then why do you blame us? Can we help ourselves?"

The butler had distinguished the sounds of footsteps in the hall. He fell hastily to rearranging the camp-chairs.

"Hush!" he warned. "Look out!" Gaylor and Rainey had but time to move apart, when Winthrop entered. He regarded the three men with a smile of understanding.

"I beg pardon," he exclaimed. "I am interrupting?"

Gaylor greeted him with exaggerated heartiness.

"Ah, it is Mr. Winthrop!" he cried. "Have you come to help us find out the truth this evening?"

"I certainly hope not!" said Winthrop brusquely. "I know the truth about too many people already." He turned to Garrett who, unobtrusively, was endeavoring to make his escape.

"I want to see Miss Vera," he said.

"Miss Vera?" interposed Gaylor, "I'm afraid that's not possible. She especially asked not to be disturbed before the séance. I'm sorry."

Winthrop's manner became suspiciously polite.

"Yes?" he inquired. "Well, nevertheless, I think I'll ask *her*. Tell Miss Vera, please," he said to Garrett, "that Mr. Winthrop would like a word with her, here," with significance he added, "in private."

In offended dignity, Judge Gaylor moved toward the door. "Dr. Rainey," he said, stiffly, "will you please inform Mr. Hallowell that his guests are now here, and that I have gone to bring them up-stairs?"

"Yes, but you won't bring them up-stairs, please," said Winthrop, "until you hear from me."

Gaylor flushed with anger and for a moment appeared upon the point of mutiny. Then, as though refusing to consider himself responsible for the manners of the younger man, he shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

With even less of consideration than he had shown to Judge Gaylor, Winthrop turned upon Rainey.

"How's your patient?" he asked, shortly. Rainey was sufficiently influenced by the liquor

he had taken to dare to resent Winthrop's peremptory tone. His own in reply was designedly offensive.

"My patient?" he inquired.

"Mr. Hallowell," snapped Winthrop. "He's sick, isn't he?"

"Oh, I don't know," returned the Doctor.

"You don't know?" demanded Winthrop. "Well, *I* know. I know if he goes through this thing to-night, he'll have another collapse. I saw one this morning. Why don't you forbid it? You're his medical adviser, aren't you?"

Rainey remained sullenly silent.

"Answer me!" insisted the District Attorney. "You are, aren't you?"

"I am," at last declared Rainey.

"Well, then," commanded Winthrop, "tell him to stop this. Tell him *I* advise it."

Through his glasses Rainey blinked violently at the District Attorney and laughed.

"I didn't know," he said, "that *you* were a medical man."

Winthrop looked at the Doctor so steadily, and for so long a time, that the eyes of the young man sought the floor and the ceiling, and his sneer changed to an expression of discomfort.

"I am not," said Winthrop. "I am the District Attorney of New York." His tones were

cold, precise; they fell upon the superheated brain of Dr. Rainey like drops from an icicle. "When I took over that office," continued Winthrop, "I found a complaint against two medical students, a failure to report the death of an old man in a private sanitarium." Winthrop lowered his eyes, and became deeply absorbed in the toe of his boot. "I haven't looked into the papers yet," he said.

Rainey, swaying slightly, jerked open the door of the bedroom. "I'll tell him," he panted, thickly. "I'll tell him to do as you say."

"Thank you, I wish you would," said Winthrop.

At the same moment, from the hall, Garrett announced, "Mrs. Vance, sir." And Mabel Vance, tremulous and frightened, entered the room.

Winthrop approached her eagerly.

"Ah! Mrs. Vance," he exclaimed, "can I see Miss Vera?"

Embarrassed and unhappy, Mrs. Vance moved restlessly from foot to foot, and shook her head.

"Please, Mr. District Attorney," she begged, "I'm afraid not. This afternoon upset her so. And she's so nervous and queer that the Professor thinks she shouldn't see nobody."

Winthrop nodded comprehendingly.

"The Professor?" he commented. His voice was considerate, conciliatory. "Now, Mrs. Vance," he said, "I've known Miss Vera ever since she was a little girl, known her longer than you have, and I'm her friend, and you're her friend, and——"

"I am," protested Mabel Vance, tearfully. "Indeed I am!"

"I know you are," Winthrop interrupted hastily. "You've been more than a friend to her; you've been a sister, mother, and you don't want any trouble to come to her, do you?"

"I don't," cried the woman. "Oh!" she exclaimed miserably, "I told them there'd be trouble!"

Winthrop laughed reassuringly.

"Well, there won't be any trouble," he declared, "if *I* can help it. And if you want to help her, help me. Persuade her to let me talk to her. Don't mind what the Professor says."

"I will," declared Mrs. Vance with determination, "I will." She started eagerly toward the hall, and then paused and returned. Her hands were clasped; her round, baby eyes, wet with tears, were fixed upon Winthrop appealingly.

"Oh, please," she pleaded, "you're not going to hurt him, are you? Paul, my husband," she

explained; "he's been such a good husband to me."

Winthrop laughed uneasily.

"Why, that'll be all right," he protested.

"He doesn't mean any harm," insisted Mrs. Vance. "He's on the level, true, he is!"

"Why, of course, of course," Winthrop assented.

Unsatisfied, Mrs. Vance burst into tears. "It's this spirit business that makes the trouble!" she cried. "I tell them to cut it out. Now, the mind-reading at the theatre," she sobbed, "there's no harm in that, is there? And there's twice the money in it. But this ghost-raising"—she raised her eyes, appealingly, as though begging to be contradicted, —"it's sure to get him into trouble, isn't it?"

Winthrop shook his head and smiled.

"It may," he said. Mrs. Vance broke into a fresh outburst of tears. "I knew it," she cried, "I knew it." Winthrop placed his hand upon her arm and turned her in the direction of the door.

"Don't worry," he said, soothingly. "Go send Miss Vera here. And—" he called after her, "don't worry."

As Mabel departed upon his errand, Rainey re-entered from the bedroom. He carefully

closed the door and halted with his hand upon the knob, and shook his head.

"It's no use," he said; "he will go on with it. It's not my fault," he whined. "I told him it would kill him. I couldn't make it any stronger than that, could I?"

Rainey was not looking at Winthrop, but, as though fearful of interruption, toward the door. His eyes were harassed, furtive, filled with miserable indecision. Many times before Winthrop had seen men in such a state. He knew that for the sufferer it foretold a physical breakdown, or that he would seek relief in full confession. To give the man confidence, he abandoned his attitude of suspicion.

"That certainly would be strong enough for me," he said, cheerfully. "Did you tell him what I advised?"

"Yes, yes," muttered Rainey, impatiently. "He said you were invited here to give advice to his niece, not to him." For the first time his eyes met those of Winthrop's boldly. The District Attorney recognized that the man had taken his fears by the throat, and had arrived at his decision.

"See here," exclaimed Rainey, "could I give you some information?"

"I'm sure you could," returned Winthrop briskly. "Give it to me now."

But Rainey, glancing toward the door, shrank back. Winthrop, following the direction of his eyes, saw Vera. Impatiently he waved Rainey away.

"At the office, to-morrow morning," he commanded.

With a sigh of relief at the reprieve, Rainey slipped back into the bedroom.

Winthrop had persuaded himself that in seeking to speak with Vera he was making only a natural choice between preventing the girl from perpetrating a fraud, or, later, for that fraud, holding her to account. But when she actually stood before him, he recognized how absurdly he had deceived himself. At the mere physical sight of her, there came to him a swift relief, a thrill of peace and deep content; and with delighted certainty he knew that what Vera might do or might not do concerned him not at all, that for him all that counted was the girl herself. With something of this showing in his face, he came eagerly toward her.

"Vera!" he exclaimed. In the word there was delight, wonder, tenderness; but if the girl recognized this she concealed her knowledge. Instead, her eyes looked into his frankly; her manner was that of open friendliness.

"Mabel tells me you want to talk to me," she said evenly, "but I don't want you to. *I*

have something I want to say to you. I could have written it, but this—" For an instant the girl paused, with her lips pressed together. When she spoke, her voice carried the firmness and finality of one delivering a verdict. "But this," she repeated, "is the last time you shall hear from me or see me again."

Winthrop gave an exclamation of impatience, of indignation.

"No," returned the girl, "it is quite final. Maybe you will not want to see me, but——"

Winthrop again sharply interrupted her. His voice was filled with reproach. "Vera!" he protested.

"Well," said the girl, more gently, "I'm glad to think you do, but this is the last, and before I go, I——"

"Go!" demanded Winthrop, roughly. "Where?"

"Before I go," continued the girl, "I want to tell you how much you have helped me—I want to thank you——"

"You haven't let me thank you," broke in Winthrop, "and, now, you pretend this is our last meeting. It's absurd!"

"It is our last meeting," replied the girl. Of the two, for the moment, she was the older, the more contained.

"On the contrary," contradicted the man.

He spoke sharply, in a tone he tried to make as determined as her own. "Our next meeting will be in ten minutes—at my sister's. I have told her about this afternoon, and about you, and she wants very much to meet you. She has sent her car for you. It's waiting in front of the house. Now," he commanded, masterfully, "you come with me and get in it, and leave all this"— he gave an angry, contemptuous wave of the hand toward the cabinet— "behind you, as," he added earnestly, "you promised me you would."

As though closing from sight the possibility he suggested, the girl shut her eyes quickly, and then opened them again to meet his.

"I can't leave these things behind me," she said quietly. "I told you so this afternoon. For a moment you made me think I could, and I did promise. I didn't need to promise. It's what I've prayed for. Then you saw what happened, you saw I was right. Within five minutes that woman came——"

"That woman had a motive," protested Winthrop.

"That woman," continued the girl patiently, "or some other woman. What does it matter? In five minutes, or five days, some one would have told." She leaned toward him anxiously. "I'm not complaining," she said; "it's my own

fault. It's the life I've chosen." She hesitated, and then as though determined to carry out a programme she had already laid down for herself, continued rapidly, "and what I want to tell you is, that what's best in that life I owe to you."

"Vera!" cried the man sharply.

"Listen!" said the girl. Her eyes were alight, eager. She spoke frankly, proudly, without embarrassment, without fear of being misconstrued, as a man might speak to a man.

"I'd be ungrateful, I'd be a coward," said the girl, "if I went away and didn't tell you. For ten years I've been counting on you. I made you a sort of standard. I said, as long as he keeps to his ideals, I'm going to keep to mine. Maybe you think my ideals have not been very high, but anyway you've made it easy for me. Because I'm in this business, because I'm good-looking enough, certain men"—the voice of the girl grew hard and cool—"have done me the honor to insult me, and it was knowing you, and that there are others like you, that helped me not to care." The girl paused. She raised her eyes to his frankly. The look in them was one of pride in him, of loyalty, of affection. "And now, since I've met you," she went on, "I find you're just as I imagined you'd be, just as I'd hoped you'd be." She reached

out her hand warningly, appealingly. "And I don't want you to change, to let down, to grow discouraged. You can't tell how many more people are counting on you." She hesitated, and, as though at last conscious of her own boldness, flushed deprecatingly, like one asking pardon. "You men in high places," she stammered, "you're like light-houses showing the way. You don't know how many people you are helping. You can't see them. You can't tell how many boats are following your light, but if your light goes out, they are wrecked." She gave a sigh of relief. "That's what I wanted to tell you," she said, "and, so thank you." She held out her hand. "And good-by."

Winthrop's answer was to clasp her hand quickly in both of his, and draw her toward him.

"Vera," he begged, "come with me now!"

The girl withdrew her hand and moved away from him, frowning. "No," she said, "no, you do not *want* to understand. I have my work to do to-night."

Winthrop gave an exclamation of anger.

"You don't mean to tell me," he cried, "that you're going on with this?"

"Yes," she said. And then in sudden alarm cried: "But not if you're here! I'll fail if

you're here. Promise me, you will not be here."

"Indeed," cried the man indignantly, "I will not! But I'll be down-stairs when you need me. And," he added, warningly, "you'll need me."

"No," said the girl. "No matter what happens, I tell you between us, this is the end."

"Then," begged the man, "if this is the end, for God's sake, Vera, as my last request, do not do it!"

The girl shook her head. "No," she repeated firmly. "I've tried to get away from it, and each time they've forced me back. Now I'll go on with it. I've promised Paul and the others. And you heard me promise that woman."

"But you didn't mean that!" protested the man. "She insulted you, you were angry. You're angry now, piqued——"

"Mr. Winthrop," interrupted the girl, "to-day you told me I was not playing the game. You told the truth. When you said this was a mean business, you were right. But," for the first time since she had spoken her tones were shaken, uncertain—"I've been driven out of every other business." She waited until her voice was again under control, and then said slowly, definitely, "And, to-night, I am going

to show Mr. Hallowell the spirit of his sister."

In the eyes of Winthrop the look of pain, of disappointment, of reproach, was so keen, that the girl turned her own away.

"No," said the man gently, "you will not do that."

"You can stop my doing it to-night," returned the girl, "but at some other time, at some other place, I will do it."

"You, yourself will stop it," said Winthrop. "You are too honest, too fine, to act such a lie. Why not be yourself?" he begged. "Why not disappoint these other people who do not know you? Why disappoint the man who knows you best, who trusts you, who believes in you——"

"You are the very one," interrupted the girl, "who doesn't know me. I am not fine, I am not honest. I *am* a charlatan and a cheat; I am all that woman called me. And that is why you can't know me. That's why I told you if you did you would be sorry."

"I am not sorry," said Winthrop.

"You will be," returned the girl, "before the night is over."

"On the contrary," answered the man quietly, "I shall wait here to congratulate you—on your failure."

"I shall not fail," said the girl. Avoiding his eyes, she turned from him, and, for a moment stood gazing before her miserably. Her lips were trembling, her eyes moist with rising tears. Then she faced him, her head raised defiantly.

"I have been hounded out of every decent way of living," she protested hysterically. "I can make thousands of dollars to-night," she cried, "out of this one."

Winthrop looked straight into her eyes. His own were pleading, full of tenderness and pity, so eloquent with meaning that those of the girl's fell before them.

"That is no answer," said the man. "You know it's not. I tell you—you will fail."

From the hall Judge Gaylor entered noisily. Instinctively the man and girl moved nearer together; and upon the intruder Winthrop turned angrily.

"Well?" he demanded, sharply.

"I thought you had finished your talk," protested the Judge. "Mr. Hallowell is anxious to begin."

Winthrop turned and looked at Vera steadily. For an instant the eyes of the girl faltered, and then she returned his glance with one as resolute as his own. As though accepting her verdict as final, Winthrop walked quickly to the

door. "I shall be down-stairs," he said. "When this is over, let me know."

Gaylor struggled to conceal his surprise and satisfaction. "You won't be here for the séance?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly not!" cried Winthrop. "I—" He broke off suddenly. Without again looking toward Vera, or trying to hide his displeasure, he left the room.

Gaylor turned to the girl. He was smiling with relief.

"Excellent!" he muttered. "Excellent! What was he saying to you," he asked, eagerly, "as I came in—that you would fail?"

The girl moved past him to the door. "Yes," she answered dully.

"But you will not!" cried the man. "We're all counting on you, you know. 'Destroy the old will. Sign the new will,'" he quoted. He came close to her and whispered: "That means thousands of dollars to you and Vance," he urged.

The girl turned and regarded him with unhappy, angry eyes.

"You need not be frightened," she answered. For the man before her and for herself her voice was bitter with contempt and self-accusation. "Mr. Winthrop is mistaken. He does not know me," she said miserably. "I shall not fail."

For a moment, after she had left him, Gaylor stood motionless, his eyes filled with concern, and then, with a shrug, as though accepting either good or evil fortune, he called from the bedroom Mr. Hallowell, and from the floor below the guests of Hallowell and of Vance.

As Hallowell, supported by Rainey, sank into the invalid's chair in the centre of the semi-circle, Gaylor made his final appeal.

"Stephen," he begged, "are you sure you're feeling strong enough? Won't some other night——"

The old man interrupted him, querulously.

"No, *now!* I want it over," he commanded. "Who knows," he complained, "how soon it may be before——"

The sight of Mannie entering the room with Vance caused him to interrupt himself abruptly. He greeted the showman with a curt nod.

"And who is this?" he demanded.

Mannie, to whom a living millionaire was much more of a disturbing spectacle than the ghost of Alexander the Great, retreated hastily behind Vance.

"He is my assistant," Vance explained. "He furnishes the music." He pushed Mannie toward the organ.

"Music!" growled Hallowell. "Must there be music?"

"It is indispensable," protested Vance. "Music, sir, is one of the strongest psychic influences. It——"

"Nonsense!" cried Hallowell. "Tricks," he muttered. "Tricks!"

Vance shrugged his shoulders, and smiled in deprecation. "I am sorry to find you in a sceptical mood, Mr. Hallowell," he murmured reprovingly. "It will hardly help to produce good results. Allow me," he begged, "to present two true believers."

With a wave of the hand he beckoned forward a stout, gray-haired woman with bulging, near-sighted eyes that rolled meaninglessly behind heavy gold spectacles.

"Mrs. Marsh, of Lynn, Massachusetts," proclaimed Vance, "of whom you have heard. Mrs. Marsh," he added, "is probably the first medium in America. The results she has obtained are quite wonderful. She alone foretold the San Francisco earthquake, and the run on the Long Acre Square Bank."

"I am glad to know you," said Mr. Hallowell. "Pardon my not rising."

The old lady courtesied obsequiously.

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Hallowell," she protested. "Mr. Hallowell," she went on, rolling the name delightedly on her tongue, "I need not tell you how greatly we spiritualists re-

joice over your joining the ranks of the believers."

Hallowell nodded. He was not altogether unimpressed. "Thanks," he commented dryly. "But I am not quite there yet, madam."

"We hope," said Vance, sententiously, "to convince Mr. Hallowell to-night."

"And I am sure, Mr. Hallowell," cried the old lady, "if any one can do it, little Miss Vera can. Hers is a wonderful gift, sir, a wonderful gift!"

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned Hallowell.

He nodded to her in dismissal, and turned to the next visitor. "And this gentleman?" he asked.

"Professor Strombergk," announced Vance, "the distinguished writer on psychic and occult subjects, editor of *The World Beyond*."

A tall, full-bearded German, in a too short frock-coat, bowed awkwardly. Upon him, as upon Mannie, had fallen the spell of the Hallowell fortune. He, who chatted familiarly with departed popes and emperors, who daily was in communication with Goethe, Cæsar, and Epictetus, thrilled with embarrassment before the man who had made millions from a coupling-pin.

"And Helen!" Mr. Hallowell cried, as Miss

Coates followed the Professor. "That is all, is it not?" he asked.

Miss Coates moved aside to disclose the person of the reporter from the *Republic*, Homer Lee.

"I have taken you at your word, uncle," she said, "and have brought a friend with me." In some trepidation she added:

"He is Mr. Lee, a reporter from the *Republic*."

"A reporter!" exclaimed Mr. Hallowell. Disturbed and yet amused at the audacity of his niece, he shook his head reprovingly. "I don't think I meant reporters," he remonstrated.

"You said in your note," returned his niece, "that as I had so much at stake, I could bring any one I pleased, and the less he believed in spiritualism the better. Mr. Lee," she added dryly, "believes even less than I do."

"Then it will be all the more of a triumph if we convince him," declared Hallowell. "Understand, young man," he proclaimed loudly, "I am not a spiritualist. I am merely conducting an investigation. I want the truth. If you, or my niece, detect any fraud to-night, I want to know it." Including in his speech the others in the room, he glared suspiciously in turn at each. "Keep your eyes open," he

ordered; "you will be serving me quite as much as you will Miss Coates."

Miss Coates and Lee thanked him, and recognizing themselves as the opposition, and in the minority, withdrew for consultation into a corner of the bay-window.

Vance approached Mr. Hallowell.

"If you are ready," he said, "we will examine the cabinet. Shall I wheel it over here, or will you look at it where it is?"

"If it is to be in that corner during the séance," declared Mr. Hallowell, "I'll look at it where it is."

As he struggled from his chair, he turned to Mrs. Marsh, and nodded his head knowingly. "You see, Mrs. Marsh," he said, "I am taking no chances."

"That is quite right, Mr. Hallowell," purred the old lady. "If there be any doubt in your mind you must get rid of it, or we will have no results."

With a dramatic gesture, Vance swept aside from the opening in the cabinet the black velvet curtain. "It's a simple affair," he said indifferently. "As you see, it's open at the top and bottom. The medium sits inside on that chair, bound hand and foot."

In turn, Mr. Hallowell, Mrs. Marsh, Gaylor, Rainey, Professor Strombergk entered the cabi-

net. With their knuckles they beat upon its sides. They moved it to and fro. They dropped to their knees, and with their fingers tugged at the carpet upon which it stood.

Under cover of their questions, in the corner of the bay-window, Miss Coates whispered to Lee:

"Don't look now," she warned, "but later, you will see on the left of that door the switch that throws on the lights. When I am sure she is outside the cabinet, when she has told him *not* to give the money to me, I'll cry, 'Now!' and whichever one of us is seated nearer to the switch will turn on all the lights. I think," Miss Coates added, with, in her voice, a thrill of triumph not altogether free from a touch of vindictiveness, "when my uncle sees her caught in the middle of the room, disguised as his sister —we will have cured him."

"It may be," said the man.

The possibility of success as Miss Coates pointed it out did not appear to stir in him any great delight. He glanced unwillingly over his shoulder. "I see the switch," he said.

Leaning on the arm of Gaylor, Mr. Hallowell returned from the cabinet to his chair. What he had seen apparently strengthened his faith and, in like degree, inspired him to greater enthusiasm.

"Well," he exclaimed, "there are no trap-doors or false bottoms about that! If they can project a spirit from that sentry box, it will be a miracle. For whom are we waiting?" he asked, impatiently. "Where is Winthrop?"

Judge Gaylor explained that Winthrop preferred to wait down-stairs, and that he had said he would remain there until the séance was finished.

"Afraid of compromising his position," commented the old man. "I'm sorry. I'd like to have him here." He motioned Gaylor to bend nearer. In a voice that trembled with eagerness and excitement, he whispered, "Henry, I have a feeling that we are going to witness a remarkable phenomenon."

Gaylor's countenance grew preternaturally grave. He nodded heavily.

"I have the same feeling, Stephen," he returned.

Vance raised his hand to command silence.

"Every one," he called, "except the committee, who are to bind and tie the medium, will take the place I give him, and remain in it. Mr. Day will please acquaint Miss Vera and Mrs. Vance with the fact that we are ready."

Up to this point Vance had appeared only as a stage manager. He had been concerned with his groupings, his lights; in assigning to his con-

federates the parts they were to play. Now that the curtain was to rise, as an actor puts on a wig and grease paint, Vance assumed a certain voice and manner. On the stage the critics would have called him a convincing actor. He made his audience believe what he believed. He knew the eloquence of a pause, the value of a surprised, unintelligible exclamation. One moment he was as professionally solemn as a "funeral director"; the next, his voice, his whole frame would shake with excitement, in an outburst of fanatic fervor. As it pleased him he could play *Hamlet*, tenderly shocked at the sight of his dead father, or *Macbeth*, retreating in horror before the ghost of *Banquo*. For the moment his manner was that of the undertaker.

"Now, Mr. Hallowell," he said hoarsely, "please to name those you wish to serve on the committee."

Mr. Hallowell waved his arm to include every one in the room.

"Everybody will serve on the committee," he declared. "Everything is to be open and above-board. The whole city is welcome on the committee. I want this to be above suspicion."

"That is my wish, also, sir," said Vance stiffly. "But a committee of more than three

is unwieldy. Suppose you name two gentlemen and I one? Or," he shrugged his shoulders, "you can name all three."

After a moment of consideration Mr. Hallowell pointed at Lee. "I choose Mr.—that young man," he announced, "and Judge Gaylor."

"I would much rather not, Stephen," Judge Gaylor whispered.

"I know, Henry," answered the other; "but I ask it of you. It will give me confidence." He turned to Vance. "You select some one," he commanded.

With a bow, Vance designated the tall German.

"Will Professor Strombergk be acceptable?" he asked.

Mr. Hallowell nodded.

"Then, the three gentlemen chosen will please come to the cabinet."

Vance, his manner now that of a master of ceremonies, assigned to each person the seat he or she was to occupy. Miss Coates with satisfaction noted that only Mrs. Vance separated Lee from the electric switch.

"I must ask you," said Vance, "to keep the seats I have assigned to you. With us to-night are both favorable and unfavorable influences. And what I have tried to do in placing you, is

to obtain the best psychic results." He moved to the door and looked into the hall, then turned, and with uplifted arm silently demanded attention.

"Miss Vera," he announced.

Followed closely, like respectful courtiers, by Mannie and Mrs. Vance, Vera appeared in the doorway, walked a few feet into the room, and stood motionless. As though already in a trance she moved slowly, without volition, like a somnambulist. Her head was held high, but her eyes were dull and unseeing. Her arms hung limply. She wore an evening gown of soft black stuff, that clung to her like a lace shawl, and which left her throat and arms bare. In spite of the clash of interests, of antagonism, of mutual distrust, there was no one present to whom the sight of the young girl did not bring an uneasy thrill. The nature of the thing she proposed to do, contrasted with the loveliness of her face, which seemed to mock at the possibility of deceit; something in her rapt, distant gaze, in the dignity of her uplifted head, in her air of complete detachment from her surroundings, caused even the most sceptical to question if she might not possess the power she claimed, to feel for a moment the approach of the supernatural.

The voices of the committee consulting to-

gether, dropped suddenly to a whisper; the others were instantly silent.

In his arms Mannie carried silken scarfs, cords, and ropes. In each hand he held a tea-cup. One contained flour, the other shot. Vance took these from him, and Mannie hurriedly slipped into his chair in front of the organ.

"Gentlemen," explained Vance, "you will use these ropes and scarfs to tie the medium. Also, as a further precaution against the least suspicion of fraud, we will subject her to the most severe test known. In one hand she will hold this flour; the other will be filled with shot. This will make it impossible for her to tamper with the ropes."

He gave the two cups to Gaylor, and turned to Vera.

"Are you ready?" he asked. After a pause, the girl slightly inclined her head. Lee, with one of the scarfs in his hand, approached her diffidently. He looked unhappily at the slight, girlish figure, at the fair white arms. In his embarrassment he appealed to Vance.

"How would you suggest?" he asked.

Vance, apparently shocked, hastily drew away. "That would be most irregular," he protested.

Apologetically Lee turned to the girl.

"Would you mind putting your arms behind

you?" he asked. He laced the scarf around her arms, and drew it tightly to her wrists.

"Tell me if I hurt you," he murmured; but the girl made no answer. To what was going forward she appeared as unmindful as though she were an artist's manikin.

"Will you take these now?" asked Gaylor, and into her open palms he poured the flour and shot. "And, now," continued Lee, "will you go into the cabinet?" As she seated herself he knelt in front of her and bound her ankles. From behind her Strombergk deftly wound the ropes about her body and through the rungs and back of the chair.

"Would you mind seeing if you can withdraw your arms?" Lee asked. The girl raised her shoulders, struggled to free her hands, and tried to rise. But the efforts were futile.

"Are the gentlemen satisfied?" demanded Vance.

The three men, who had shown but little heart in the work, and who were now red and embarrassed, hastily answered in the affirmative.

"If you are satisfied the ropes are securely fastened," Vance continued, "you will take your seats." Professor Strombergk, as he moved to his chair, announced in devout, solemn tones, "Nothing but spirit hands can move those ropes now."

From the organ rose softly the prelude to a Moody and Sankey hymn, and, in keeping with the music, the voice of Vance sank to a low tone.

"We will now," he said, "establish the magnetic chain. Each person will take with his right hand the left wrist of the person on his or her right." He paused while this order was being carried to effect.

"Before I turn out the lights," he continued, "I wish to say a last word to any sceptic who may be present. I warn him that any attempt to lay violent hands upon the apparition, or spirit, may cost the medium her life. From the cabinet the medium projects the spirit into the circle. An attack upon the spirit is an attack upon the medium. There are three or four well-authenticated cases where the disembodied spirit was cut off from the cabinet, and the medium died."

He drew the velvet curtains across the cabinet, and shut Vera from view. "Are you ready, Mr. Hallowell?" he asked. Mr. Hallowell, his eyes staring, his lips parted, nodded his head. The music grew louder. Vance switched off the lights.

For some minutes, except for the creaking of the pedals of the organ and the low throb of the music, there was no sound. Then, from his

"Tell me if I hurt you," he murmured.

position at the open door, the voice of Vance commanded sternly: "No whispering, please. The medium is susceptible to the least sound." There was another longer pause, until in hushed, expectant tones Vance spoke again. "The air is very heavily charged with electricity to-night," he said. "*You*, Mrs. Marsh, should feel that."

"I do, Professor," murmured the medium. "I do. We shall have some wonderful results!"

Vance agreed with her, solemnly. "I feel influences all about me," he murmured.

There came suddenly from the cabinet three sharp raps. These were instantly answered by other quick rappings upon the library table. "They are beginning!" chanted the voice of Vance. The music of the organ ceased. It was at once followed by the notes of a guitar that seemed to float in space, the strings vibrating, not as though touched by human hands, but in fitful, meaningless chords like those of an Æolian harp.

"That is Kiowa, *your* control, Mrs. Marsh," announced Vance eagerly. "Do you desire to speak to him?"

"Not to-night," Mrs. Marsh answered. She raised her voice. "Not to-night, Kiowa," she repeated. "Thank you for coming. Good-night."

In deep, guttural accents, a man's voice came from the ceiling. "Good-night," it called. With a final, ringing wail the music of the guitar suddenly ceased.

Again rose the swelling, low notes of the organ. Above it came the quick pattering of footsteps.

The voice of Rainey, filled with alarm, cried, "Some one touched me!"

"Are you sure your hands are held?" demanded Vance reprovingly.

"Yes," panted Rainey, "both of them. But something put its hand on my forehead. It was cold."

In an excited whisper a voice in the circle cried, "Look, look!" and before the eyes of all a star rose in the darkness. For a moment it wavered over the cabinet and then fluttered swiftly across the room and remained stationary above the head of the German Professor.

"There is your star, Professor," cried Vance. "When the Professor is in the circle," he announced proudly, "that star always appears."

He was interrupted by a startled exclamation from Lee.

"Something touched my face," explained the young man, apologetically, "and spoke to me."

The music sank to a murmur, and the room became alive with swift, rushing sounds and soft whisperings.

The voice of Mrs. Marsh, low and eager, could be heard appealing to an invisible presence.

"The results are marvellous," chanted Vance; "marvellous! The medium is showing wonderful power. If any one desires to ask a question, he should do so now. The conditions will never be better." He paused expectantly. "Mr. Hallowell," he prompted, "is it your wish to communicate with any one in the spirit world?"

There was a long pause, and then the voice of Mr. Hallowell, harsh and shaken, answered, "Yes."

"With whom?" demanded Vance.

There was again another longer pause, and then, above the confusion of soft whisperings, the voice of the old man rose in sharp staccato: "My sister; Catherine Coates." His tone hardened, became obdurate, final. "But I must see her and hear her speak!"

Not for an instant did Vance hesitate. In tense, sepulchral tones he demanded of the darkness, "Is the spirit of Catherine Coates present?"

The whisperings and murmurs ceased. The silence of the room was broken sharply by three quick raps. "Yes," intoned Vance; "she is present."

The voice of Hallowell protested fiercely: "I won't have that! I want to *see* her!"

In the tone of an incantation, Vance spoke again: "Will the spirit show herself to her brother?" The raps came quickly, firmly.

"She answers she will appear before you."

There was a moment that seemed to stretch interminably, and then the eyes of all, straining in the darkness, saw against the black velvet curtain a splash of white.

As it moved toward them it took shape, and by the faint light that came through the curtains from the hall they distinguished the bent figure of a woman, apparently an old woman, with a white cap and white hair, and across her shoulders a white kerchief.

Above the sobbing of the organ, the voice of Mr. Hallowell rang out in a sharp exclamation of terror. "Who is that?" he demanded. He spoke as though he dreaded the answer. He threw himself forward in his chair, peering into the darkness.

"Is that you, Kate?" he whispered. His voice was both incredulous and pleading. The answer came in feeble, trembling tones. "Yes."

The voice of Hallowell shook with eagerness.

"Do you know me, your brother, Stephen?"

"Yes."

With a cry the old man fell back, groping

blindly. He found Gaylor's arm and clutched it with both hands.

"My God! It's Kate!" he gasped. "I tell you, Henry, it *is* Kate!"

The voice of Vance, deep and hollow like a bell, sounded a note of warning. "Speak quickly," he commanded. "Her time on earth is brief." Mr. Hallowell's hold upon the arm of his friend relaxed. Fearfully and slowly he bent forward.

"Kate!" he pleaded, "I must ask you a question. No one else can tell me." As though gathering courage, he paused and, with a frightened sigh, again began: "I am an old man," he murmured, "a sick man. I will be joining you very soon. *What* am I to do with my money? I have made great plans to give it to the poor. Or, must I give it, as I have given it in my will, to Helen? Perhaps I did not act fairly to you and Helen. You know what I mean. She would be rich, but then the poor would be that much the poorer." The confidence of the speaker was increasing as, though to a living being, he argued and pleaded: "And I want to do some good before I go. What shall I do? Tell me."

There was a pause that lasted so long that those who had held their breath to listen again breathed deeply. When the answer came it

was strangely deprecatory, uncertain, unassured.

"You," stammered the voice, "you must have courage to do what you know to be just!"

For a brief moment, as though surprised, Mr. Hallowell apparently considered this, and then gave an exclamation of disappointment and distress.

"But I *don't* know," he protested; "that is why I called on you. I want to go into the next world, Kate," he pleaded, "with clean hands!"

This time the answer came more firmly. But it was still without feeling, without conviction.

"You cannot bribe your way into the next world," intoned the voice. "If you pity the poor you must help the poor, not that you may cheat your way into heaven, but that they may suffer less. Search your conscience. Have the courage of your conscience."

"I don't *want* to consult my conscience," cried the old man. "I want *you* to tell me." He paused, hesitating. Eager to press his question, his awe of the apparition still restrained him.

"What do you mean, Kate?" he begged. "Am I to give the money where it will do the most good—to the Hallowell Institute—or am I to give it to Helen? Which am I to do?"

There was another long silence, and then the voice stammered: "If—if you have wronged me, or my daughter, or the poor, you must make restitution."

The hand of the old man was heard to fall heavily upon the arm of his chair. His voice rose unhappily.

"*That* is no answer, Kate!" he cried. "Did you come from the dead to preach to me! Tell me—what am I to do—leave my money to Helen, or to the Institute?"

The cry of the old man vibrated in the air. No voice rose to answer. "Kate!" he entreated. Still there was silence. "Speak to me!" he commanded. The silence became eloquent with momentous possibilities. So long did it endure, that the pain of the suspense was actual. The voice of Rainey, choked and hoarse with fear, broke it with an exclamation that held the sound of an oath. He muttered thickly, "What in the name of——"

He was hushed by a swift chorus of hisses. The voice of Hallowell was again uplifted.

"Why won't she answer me?" he begged hysterically of Vance. "Can't you—can't the medium make her speak?"

During the last few moments the music from the organ had come brokenly. The hands upon the keys moved unsteadily, drunkenly. Now

they halted altogether, and in the middle of a chord the music sank and died. Upon the now absolute silence the voice of Vance, when he spoke, sounded strangely unfamiliar. It had lost the priest-like intonation. Its confidence had departed. It showed bewilderment and alarm.

"I—I don't understand," stammered the showman. "Ask her again. Put your question differently."

Carefully, slowly, giving each word its value, Mr. Hallowell raised his voice in entreaty.

"Kate," he cried, "I have made a new will, leaving the money to the poor. The old will gives it to Helen. Shall I sign the new will or not? Shall I give the money to Helen or to the Institute? Answer me! Yes, or no."

Before the eyes of all, the apparition, as though retreating to the cabinet, swayed backward, then staggered forward. There was a sob, human, heart-broken; a cry, thrilling with distress; a tumult of weeping, fierce and uncontrollable.

They saw the figure tear away the white kerchief and cap, and trample them upon the floor. They saw the figure hold itself erect. From it the voice of Vera cried aloud, in despair.

"I can't! I can't!" she sobbed. "It's a lie! I am *not* your sister! Turn on the lights," the girl cried. "Turn on the lights!"

There was a crash of upturned chairs, the sound of men struggling, and the room was swept with light. In the doorway Winthrop was holding apart Vance and the reporter.

In the centre of the room stood Vera, her head bent in shame, her body shaken and trembling, her hair streaming to her waist.

As though to punish herself, by putting a climax to her humiliation, she held out her arms to Helen Coates. "You see," she cried, "I *am* a cheat. I *am* a fraud!" She sank suddenly to her knees in front of Mr. Hallowell. "Forgive me," she sobbed. "Forgive me!"

With a cry of angry protest, Winthrop ran to her and lifted her to her feet. His eyes were filled with pity. But in the eyes of Mr. Hallowell there was no promise of pardon. With sudden strength he struggled to his feet and stood swaying, challenging those before him. His face was white with anger, his jaw closed against mercy.

"You've lied to me!" he cried. "You've tried to rob me!" He swept the room with his eyes. With a flash of intuition he saw the trap they had laid for him. "All of you!" he screamed. "It's a plot!" He shook his fist at the weeping girl. "And you!" he shouted, hysterically, "the law shall punish *you!*"

Winthrop drew the girl to him and put his arm about her.

"I'll do the punishing here," he said.

With a glad, welcoming cry, the old man turned to him, appealingly, wildly.

"Yes, you!" he shouted. "*You* punish them! She plotted to get my money."

The girl at Winthrop's side shivered and shrank from him. He drew her back roughly and held her close. The sobs that shook her tore at his heart; the touch of the sinking, trembling body in his arms filled him with fierce, jubilant thoughts of keeping the girl there always, of giving battle for her, of sheltering her against the world. In what she had done he saw only a sacrifice. In her he beheld only a penitent, who was self-accused and self-convicted.

He heard the voice of the old man screaming vindictively: "She plotted to get my money!"

Winthrop turned upon him savagely.

"How did you plot to get it?" he retorted fiercely. "You know and I know. I know how your lawyer, your doctor, your servant plotted to get it!" His voice rose and rang with indignation. "You all plotted, and you all schemed—and to what end—what was the result"—he held before them the fainting figure of the girl—"that one poor child could prove she was honest!"

With his arms still about her, and her hands clinging to him, he moved with her quickly to the door. When they had reached the silence of the hall, he took her hands in his, and looked into her eyes. "Now," he commanded, "you shall come to my sisters!"

The waiting car carried them swiftly up the avenue. Their way lay through the park, and the warm mid-summer air was heavy with the odor of plants and shrubs. Above them the trees drooped deep with leaves. Vera, crouched in a corner, had not spoken. Her eyes were hidden in her hands. But when they had entered the silent reaches of the park she lowered them and the face she lifted to Winthrop was pale and wet with tears. The man thought never before had he seen it more lovely or more lovable. Vera shook her head dumbly and looked up at him with a troubled smile.

"I told you," she murmured remorsefully, "you'd be sorry."

"We don't know that yet," said Winthrop gently; "we'll have all the rest of our lives to find that out."

Startled, the girl drew back. In her face was wonder, amazement, a dawning happiness.

Without speaking, Winthrop looked at her, entreatingly, pitifully, beseeching her with his eyes.

Slowly the girl bent forward and, as he threw out his arms, with a little sigh of rest and content, she crept into them and pressed her face to his.

THE ROMANCE IN THE LIFE OF HEFTY BURKE

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Hefty Burke was a young man of honest countenance and godlike figure, who had been born by some mischance in the Fourth Ward, instead of in a more exclusive neighborhood, where he would later in life have been able to show off the godlike figure in a frock coat. Having been born on the East River front, he had followed the river for a livelihood ever since, and could swim when other children of his age were learning to walk about alone. This fact had been demonstrated only by accident, but was vouched for by those who had seen him at the age of three jump out of his father's arms over the railing of an excursion-boat, and paddle around in the water until dragged out of it at the end of a boat-hook.

At the age of twenty-five he was making small sums of money by backing himself to win in swimming races, and had been given numerous medals for saving life. This latter recreation he regarded only as a divertisement. He did not make a business of it, and it was not to him a matter of serious moment, like the

winning of long-distance championships. But neither of these performances made him wealthy, and it was most necessary that he should become so in order that he might marry Miss Mary Casey, the daughter of the janitor of the Mount Blanc Flats. Hefty was very much in love with her, and had urged her to marry him and live on the little money he could earn, but Miss Casey was a thoughtful young person, and thoroughly appreciated her own value. She wished him to show his love by appreciating it also. It is sometimes difficult to express the magnitude of one's love by one's wages, and Hefty found this true, but Miss Casey saw no excuse in it. They had been engaged for over a year.

But while it was difficult for him to earn money, it was as easy for him to drag a drowning man from death to the pier-head as for you to guide a blind man from one sidewalk to the other, or a girl across a ballroom; and his manner in doing the one thing was as matter-of-fact and as little self-conscious as yours would probably be in performing the other. If the drowning person struggled, he ducked her, if it chanced to be a woman; or, if it were a man, drew away an arm's-length and trod water until he had posed his victim properly, when he would strike him once between the eyes, and then slip

him over his shoulder like a bag of meal, and sweep in with him to a firm mooring.

There was not, accordingly, the least hesitation in the movements of Mr. Burke when the daughter of Señor Juan Alvarez failed to place her foot on the lower rung of the accommodation-ladder, and sank between the port side of the tramp steamer *Liverpool* and the *Liverpool's* long-boat. There was no one left in the *Liverpool's* long-boat to go after her, because her father, who had rowed it over from the slip, had mounted the ship's ladder first, and was trying to balance himself on it, and at the same time hold the long-boat back against a turning tide that strove to wrench it out of his hands. Mr. Burke was at this moment tacking around the stern of the steamer in a catboat. There was no time to go about and chase the broad white hat that rose for an instant at the foot of the ladder, so when he heard the father scream he dropped his sheet and tiller and dived over the boat's rail to leeward, leaving her reeling and careening impotently in the wind. The broad straw hat rose once more at the steamer's bow and sank again, but Mr. Burke was in close pursuit now, going hand after hand even faster than the current, with his head under water, and turning his mouth to the surface at each fifth stroke to gasp for a breath of air. And

when down below him he saw, turning and twisting in the sharp undercurrent, a slim white figure, he dived for it and brought it up firmly under his arm, and struck out confidently for the anchor-chain that stretched above his head a few rods farther back, quivering in the current. He reached it with a few quick strokes, and threw his arm over it and hung there, breathing heavily, and shaking the damp hair from his eyes. He saw the men of the *Liverpool* tumbling into the long-boat, and three tugs making toward him with fierce shrieks of their whistles, and the passengers on a lumbering ferry-boat crowded at the rail and pointing him out. It is almost as difficult to drown in the upper bay as in Madison Square, and Mr. Burke, knowing this, concerned himself not at all with the approaching aid, but turned his eyes with careless interest to the face beside his own. The broad straw hat had been wrenched away, and the long hair loosened, and the smooth oval face pressed against his was still warm through the water which ran from it. It was a different face from any which Mr. Burke had known. He would have classed its owner, had he been asked to give a guess at her nationality, as a foreigner, and more particularly as "Eye-talian," Italians being to him a generic term for all those people not born between the East and

North rivers. But he admitted mentally that it was a very beautiful face. The lashes were longer than any he had ever seen, and the lips smaller, and the skin a warmer, browner tint, which made the clinched teeth under the parted lips more white by contrast. It reminded him of a picture he knew in the cathedral, but he could not recall just then where he had seen it. The face was so delicate and beautiful that he instinctively moved his own away from it, and relaxed his hold round the girl's body, and as her head sank back on his shoulder he gave a short laugh, and wondered with a grim smile what Mary Casey would say if she could see him then. One of the men in the long-boat lifted her up gently, and her father seized her and caressed her and moaned and wept over her, chattering in a soft, unknown tongue. Hefty had never before seen a man of his age weep, and he observed it with interest, as he pulled himself up over the bow of the boat. The captain of one of the three tugs leaned over the low rail and recognized Hefty with a wave of his hand.

"I bet on it it was you," he said. And then added, looking down at his shoulder with a languishing smile, "Who's your friend?"

Mr. Burke reddened fiercely at this, and did not answer, but whether he had blushed from

anger or embarrassment he could not tell. He still felt the touch of the girl's face against his own, and as he became conscious of this, he rubbed his cheek hastily with the back of his hand, as a tribute of fidelity to Miss Casey, who had not been there to see.

He sailed back to the slip in his recovered catboat with a strange sensation of excitement and unrest. He had never felt excited when he had saved other people, and he attributed his feeling so at this time to the embarrassingly fervid gratitude of the queer little father, or to the white liquor he had given him from a long-necked flask.

"It was awful hot stuff," he argued, "and he certainly did take on about it. Might have been her mother from the way he took on." Then he said "Foreigners," briefly, as though that explained it all, and went up to the tenement to change his wet clothes.

There was really no necessity for his sailing out to the *Liverpool* again. He knew that quite well as he beat uncertainly about in the wind. He knew the girl had recovered, for she had opened her eyes before he had left the boat, and had smiled up at her father; so there was absolutely no reason for his returning. Still, he argued, her father had asked him to do so—had, indeed, entreated him to let them see him

again. Perhaps it was only his excitable Southern manner and meant nothing.

And then, again, he would not like them to go away thinking he had been ungracious and rude. They had asked him to come back to dinner, and it was even possible that they might at that moment be waiting for him. His hand pushed the tiller away, and then drew it back with a jerk, and threw the boat into the wind again. He would not go back. What right had he to go calling on strange girls, and "foreigners" at that? But as soon as he had determined he had no right to show this interest in an unknown woman, and that he would sail on to the pier, he put the boat sharply about, and headed it directly for the steamer. It seemed as if the boat did not go fast enough, and in order that he might not again change his intention he thought of the race he had on with Robinson for the next Tuesday, and had just determined that the stakes were not large enough, and that he would demand more money, when the sail of his catboat fluttered in the wind, and left him at the foot of the *Liverpool's* ladder.

They were very glad to see him, and he felt satisfied that he had come, and so expressed himself, and his pleasure in finding that the young girl was not at all the worse in health

for her journey under the water. She said nothing to this, but smiled upon him from beneath the long lashes with dark, sleepy eyes. Her father seemed to be a very pleasant little man for a "foreigner," with a great deal of manner, which compared favorably with that of the Frenchman who taught all the fashionable dances for fifty cents an hour, and for nothing to those who formed classes of six or over, at Sorley's Terrace Garden. Mr. Burke could not remember having met with such pleasant people before. They ate in the captain's cabin in company with two of the ship's mates, who were men of doubtful nationality, and who said but little, but who regarded Mr. Burke closely, and drank frequently from the long-necked bottle. The *Liverpool*, so they informed him, was an English tramp steamer, chartered to carry sewing-machines and other manufactured articles to a port in Colombia, a South American republic, as they further explained. Señor Alvarez was the owner of the cargo, and his daughter accompanied him for his better companionship and for a sight of the great city of New York. Mr. Burke, in turn, told them proudly of some of its wonders, and volunteered to show them its "sights." He thought they should certainly see Central Park before they left, and "take in" a dance at the Terrace Gar-

den. He would also be pleased to get them seats for the play then running at Niblo's, which was, so he understood, a "piece" worth seeing. His advances were received with polite consideration, but the señor regretted, in bad English but with perfect grace, their immediate departure. They had been lying for the past fortnight at the pier-head, and had but that morning anchored in the basin, to be in readiness to start with the tide at midnight. Mr. Burke received this information dumbly. He could not tell why, but he felt strangely hurt at their so soon going away. It was as if they had not only rejected him, but his rising feelings of friendliness and hospitality. But then, he answered himself, it could mean nothing to him whether they went or came. And yet when the dinner was over he was loath to go. He stood on the deck and pointed with his hand to the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island.

"That's something youse ought'r see," he said, "but I guess you've been over it. No? It's a great bit of work inside, with stairs all the way up. You wouldn't think how big it is from here. Why, mor'n a dozen men can stand on the ledge round the hand. If you like," he added, consciously, "I'll sail you over there." He looked at the señorita as he spoke, and she glanced at her father, and he looked doubtfully

at Burke, at which the young man reddened, and then the Spaniard, seeing this, told his daughter that she should go, of course, that it was most courteous of the brave gentleman who had risked his life for her. He himself could not attend them, as there were clearing-papers to sign and a crew to choose.

The sun was sinking over the Jersey flats when they turned and headed back to the steamer. The girl sat silently in the cross-seat amidships, with one hand trailing in the water and with the other shading her eyes. She wore a light dress, open at the throat, and she had thrown a black lace scarf over her head and shoulders, with one end hanging. It served her for both head-dress and shawl, and though Mr. Burke condemned it as fantastic, he admitted that it was more becoming to her than Miss Casey's flat hat would have been. They had passed the last two hours together, stopping to rest on the grass around the base of the statue, and watching the boats of different make pass and repass the little island. It had seemed to Burke as if it were all their own, as if the two of them had been cast adrift there, and that the rest of the world had gone on with its worries and business and making of money and keeping of engagements without their caring or knowing. He looked with contempt upon

the big ferry-boat that had to move on schedule time, and listened with a feeling of pity to the hoarse warnings of the tugs, and all the other whistles and bells that told of work and hurry. The strange girl at his side filled him with a feeling of distance from it all, her soft, lazy voice and slow speech, as she picked out and formed her sentences, quieted and soothed, and yet unsettled him. The places and things of which she spoke were so widely different from what he knew, and appeared, as she told of them, as though they must be so much richer and fuller and more plentiful. A land where it was always noon, with trees and flowers and clear skies, and where no one worked; where the earth furnished food freely, and where the men seemed to do nothing all day but sit and smoke in the open squares; where the nights were filled with music and dancing, and every one sat out-of-doors while the band played on the plaza.

"Yes," said Burke, breathing heavily, and staring down with a troubled look at the dark eyes of the girl stretched on the seat below him. "It sounds as if I'd like it. It ain't like this, is it?" he said, with a wave of his hand as a great flat scow, laden with freight cars, pushed past them with a panting tug at her side.

"Ah, yes; but, however," said the girl, slowly, "you have that." She raised her arm from her side and stretched it out, with her long slim fingers pointing at the great bronze statue which stood out black against the red glow of the sunset.

"How?" said Burke; "have wot? I don't understand."

The girl rested her chin on her hand, and looked past him at the statue. Her lids closed heavily, so that he could hardly see her eyes. She shook her head. "You have liberty," she said, as though she were speaking to herself, "and freedom; you have it all. You have no tyrants in your country. It is all free and open and noble. With us there is no law. We are afraid to speak—we are afraid—" She stopped and closed her lips as though to compel herself to silence.

Burke watched her with a deep interest, which he believed was in what she said, but which was in the fact that she had said it. He waited for her to continue, but she remained silent.

"Wot do you mean?" he asked, softly. "Who's hurting you in Colombia?"

"We do not live in Colombia," she said. "Oh yes, the boat goes there, but our own home —the home I spoke of to you—is in Ecuador.

There is peace in Colombia, but now with us there is war and revolution, and men are shot in the streets because they will not suffer to be robbed." She stopped again, and held her hands before her face.

"Shot in the street, eh?" said Mr. Burke, gravely. "Wot! Don't the police stop 'em?"

"It is a revolution," said the girl, impatiently. "My people have been struggling for many years against oppression. My uncle," she said, consciously, "should be President of Ecuador, but now because Gonzales has the army with him my uncle cannot take his place, but hides in the mountains without a home. They hunt him like a bandit. They have turned his house into a barracks for Gonzales's soldiers. I myself saw their tents and horses in the gardens where I have walked many times. It is all confiscate—you understand?"

"Yes," said Burke, shaking his head solemnly. "I read it in the papers. I read there was fighting going on down there; but I didn't take no notice to it, it's so far away," he added, apologetically.

"So far away!" the girl repeated, with quick offense. "Do not men love their homes everywhere they may be? And love their free life, and to—be masters? I and my people have had no home for years; my uncle, chosen of

the people, is driven from the city by a paid military, by a man who robs the rich and taxes the poor—taxes the salt they eat."

Mr. Burke reddened slowly. "Huh!" he said, fiercely. "He does, hey? Well, wot are all your men doing all this time?"

The girl gave him a quick look of approval. She leaned forward, with her eyes fixed on his. "They do the best they can," she said slowly. "They are poor, but not so poor but when they get the guns and the cannons and the powder, like all that Gonzales has, they will not be poor no more." She opened her clasped arms, and threw her hands out with a quick, impulsive gesture. "Then the brother of my dear father," she whispered, "will come back at the head of the army to the people who have chosen him, and those inside will open the gates, and he will march in and drive Gonzales away, and Gonzales will die, and there will be peace again and freedom, and no more taxes, nor stealing, nor assassinations." The tears came to her eyes and ran slowly down her cheeks, but she did not touch them. "Ah, yes, we have brave men," she said, raising her head proudly and nodding at him.

Burke shifted his hand on the tiller and looked away. "And brave women, I guess," he said. "I wish," he began—"I wish I could do something," he concluded, impotently.

The girl smiled quickly, and straightened her head and shoulders. "Yes, I did not do wrong to speak to you," she said, considering him with grave, kind eyes. "You do understand it. You are brave; yes, you are brave, and you now know what it is that we suffer."

Mr. Burke made no answer, but looked past and beyond her. She seemed to have forgotten him in the thoughts which her words had brought back to her, and sat, with her chin on her hand, gazing steadily across the water. It was all new to him, and he let himself go for the time, and did not try to shake off the hold the girl had laid upon him. Mary Casey and her yellow hair and proud nose, that was borne in air as the daughter's of a janitor should be, grew familiar and commonplace; her complainings and upbraidings returned to him with a jar, and he compared, unwillingly enough, her love of the gossip of the tenement and of the corner flirtations, and her envy of other girls more fortunate in richer young men, with this queer, beautiful girl, who treated him as a hero, and whose life seemed mixed up with danger and the making of Presidents. He remembered with fresh regret the lack of appreciation Miss Casey had shown when he helped make a President by acting as window-man at the last election. He was sure this girl would have better understood the importance of that service.

Señor Alvarez received them at the head of the accommodation-ladder, and bade Burke make the boat fast. "You will remain to eat with us," he said.

Burke did not argue with himself this time, but told himself that this was for the last time, and that he would never again see these strange people who had come so suddenly into his life.

The moon rose early that night, and by the time they came out upon the deck had spread its light over the river and softened the red and green lights at the yards of the many steamers anchored about them. It had turned the deck white and the ratlines and cordage black, and threw their shadows before them as they walked. The Jersey shore lay like a black frame to the picture, broken by blocks of blazing lights at the ferries, which glowed like open fireplaces against the dark background of the city. And to the north the Battery showed a curve of lamps, and high above it rose the Bridge like a great spider's web, dotted with a double row of stars. But Burke saw nothing of this; he was thinking of the hot, restless country with the queer name, many miles away, of which he had but just learned, and yet for which he felt a fierce turmoil of sympathy.

Though it was so late, the men were still lowering cases and boxes from the main-deck into

the open hatch with the aid of a creaking derrick, and the three stood on the bridge and watched them in silence. A mate, with his hands in the pockets of his jacket, directed them in a low voice and in a strange tongue, and the moonlight gave to the men and their work a strange and unfamiliar aspect. The derrick swung short of the hatch, and stopped with a jerk, and the box it had lifted shook free from the rope about it, and came down, turning over in the air. There was a warning cry from the mate, and a crash as the box struck. It burst into a dozen pieces, and there tumbled out upon the moonlit deck a scattered mass of glittering sabres. Señor Alvarez uttered a quick, foreign oath, and threw himself in front of Burke, as though to shut the sight from him; but Burke only turned toward the girl and smiled in sympathy. The smile, more than anything else, seemed to startle the little Spaniard, and he glanced quickly at his daughter for a word of explanation.

"I have told him," she said. "I have told him much, and he guesses the rest."

"You have guessed? Yes," said Alvarez, fiercely; "what have you guessed?"

Burke shrugged his shoulders irresolutely. "It's no business of mine," he said. "I only wish it was," he added. He turned away,

while the father and daughter spoke to each other quickly in their own language. Then the Spaniard turned and surveyed Burke with steady deliberation.

"You are a brave young man," he began, slowly, and speaking with soft intentness. "You have shown us to-day that you think of other lives before your own. Is it not so? You have done very much for me; what will you do more?" He paused, dramatically, and held out his arms.

Burke regarded him with a troubled countenance. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Come with us," urged the Spaniard, quickly. "That is what I mean. Come with us. My daughter, she has told me what you know. She did wrong to tell you, perhaps. We shall see. Perhaps no; perhaps she has done well. Come with us, and I will make you a captain. You will have many men under your command, and much of glory and reward, and when my brother is in the capital again you will be a man with many titles to honor, and a home for yourself with beautiful gardens about it. We need brave men. You are a brave man. Will you come?" The girl moved slowly to her father, and stood beside him, with one hand resting on his shoulder, and looked at Burke from under the shadow of the black mantilla. He could

see her eyes shining in the moonlight. They neither invited nor repelled him, but questioned him earnestly. There was a moment's pause, and then Burke shook himself and laughed weakly. He thrust his hands deep into his pockets and stood slouching, with his chin thrown out, and smiling bitterly at the great buildings around Bowling Green. "Well?" said the older man, with sharp suspicion in his voice.

"You needn't think that— You can't understand," said Burke. "I am not good at saying things," he added, impotently. "Wot I mean is," he began again, "you wouldn't understand, even if I was to tell you."

"You have seen much," said the Spaniard, slowly. "You know more than any man in this country knows. My daughter, she has told you why we come; you see for yourself why we come." His voice rose to a sharp climax of excitement and suspicious fear. "I make no more promises. I command you. You understand, you *must* go with us; you *must* go. We cannot trust you to leave behind."

Burke's hands came out of his pockets with a jerk. "Wot!" he growled, savagely. "You can't trust me, can't you? Why not? Wot do you know of wot I've got to do, of wot I'd like to do if I had my way? I'm promised. I've given my word to do something else. I'd

like to fight and row with the best of you—for you and for the lady there. But—but I'm not free. I've got my work cut out for me where I am. I've got to stay here."

"You have got to stay here," repeated the Spaniard, suspiciously. "Yet you are a young man. You cannot have family or much business. You take your pleasure swimming and sailing in your boat in this bay. I have been informed so of you since you were here this morning. All these people know of you. They say you are very brave, and that you are free. They all say good of you, but now you know too much than is good for you. You shall come with me."

Burke gave the girl a troubled glance and shook his head. "Can't you understand?" he asked; and then added, straightening himself and trying to give an air of importance to what he was about to say, "I'm engaged."

"Engaged—what is that?" demanded the Spaniard, quickly.

"I'm engaged to be married to a young woman. I've got to stay at home and take care of her."

The Spaniard regarded him closely for a moment with evident incredulity, and then burst into a laugh which mocked him.

"Oh," he said, "it is that, is it? It is a young

woman. It is *always* so. You have here honor, money, and much renown, and great good to do, and you remember this young woman. Let me not keep you!" he cried, with a sudden change of manner. "Let us not detain you from her any more. You are no doubt impatient to be back." He bowed with exaggerated courtesy, and, with an air of relief and amusement, moved backward toward the top of the ladder. "Let us not keep you," he said, laughing.

Burke observed him with a sick feeling of rage at the injustice of it, and then raised his eyes slowly to those of the girl. She had turned from them, and was standing erect and motionless, with her hands resting on the polished rail and gazing steadily at the shore. She must surely understand, Burke thought.

"Perhaps," interrupted the mocking voice of the father—"perhaps it is that you do not desire to go for war. Fighting, it is true, is full of danger." He laughed and bowed again, motioning with a wave of the hand toward the ladder.

Burke turned and looked at him, with his shoulders bent and his head lowered. It reminded the Spaniard suddenly of a bull he had seen in the ring after the matadors had tormented it, and just before it had plunged for-

ward and hurled a man lifeless against the President's box. He straightened himself, and fell back a step. "Perhaps," he said, quickly, "there is something I do not comprehend. You will pardon me, but I misunderstood."

Burke regarded him steadily for some short time, and then turned away without having heard what he had said. He slipped his cap from his head, and moved a step nearer the girl. "It isn't that I am afraid of the fighting—*you* know that," he said—"but that I am afraid of something else." He stopped and stood with his eyes fixed so earnestly on the girl's face that she seemed to feel them, and her shoulders moved slightly as though the cool night air had made her tremble. "I am afraid of breaking my promise that's given," he said. He waited a moment, but the girl did not move, or show by any sign that she had heard him. "I can't do that," he begged. His voice was full of doubt and trouble. "I can't do that, can I?" The girl still stood motionless, and then shrugged her shoulders slightly, and turned out the palms of her hands. Burke drew a long breath, and straightened himself resolutely.

"Good-by," said Burke.

She put her hand out slowly, and barely touched it to his own, and then walked the short length of the bridge away from him. He

went down the ladder and over the side without looking back again, and dropped into his boat. He had gone up the ladder so proudly that morning, and now the world and all the world's ways seemed ajar and devious, and his reason neither applauded him for having made a sacrifice, nor assured him that he had done well.

As his boat rounded the bow of the steamer, a row-boat shot out from under her side, and its solitary occupant pulled off with short, quick strokes for the shore. It was the sudden sight of Burke's boat and the sail looming white in the moonlight that had startled him, and Burke, recognizing this, called to him to stop. The oarsman answered with a quicker pull on the oar, and bowed his head as if to hide his face from observation. Burke shortened sail, and in a moment drew up at the row-boat's side. "Oh, it's you, is it?" he said. "You" was Mr. "Big" Marks.

Mr. Marks was the proprietor of a sailors' lodging-house, who robbed his lodgers, and as a return helped them to rob their vessels; who smuggled in a small way, and even, it is said, was not too proud to stoop to inform on other gentlemen who smuggled in a larger way.

"Give me your rope," commanded Mr. Burke. "I'll tow ye in."

The man in the boat sat motionless. "You

needn't mind me, Hefty," he whined, humbly. "I'm just rowing about; I can get in by myself."

Mr. Burke regarded him with steady scrutiny.

"You're lying," he said; "give me that rope. Wot was ye doing under the bow of that steamer? And," he continued, angrily, "wot did you try to get away from me so fast for?"

Mr. Marks threw him his painter, and crawled over the side of the catboat. "One of my men," he began, glibly enough, "is on the *Liverpool:* he's a Swede that's a regular customer of mine when he's in port. I just rowed out to see him off. They get away in an hour or two."

"In an hour," corrected Burke. He looked back at the steamer with heavy eyes, and seemed for the moment to have forgotten his sudden animosity toward his prisoner. Seeing which, Mr. Marks lit a cigar, and offered another with a propitiatory smile to Burke.

"It's good," he said; "it's never seen no custom-house."

"I'm not smoking," said Burke, grimly.

"Training again, hey?" asked Mr. Marks, pleasantly. "Well, my money is on you this time, and every time. There ain't none of 'em as can touch you—that's what *I* say."

Burke made no reply to this, but gazed at his

companion with stern inquiry and with troubled eyes. He did not speak again until they had reached the wharf, and then, as Mr. Marks started away with a hasty "good-night," he called sharply after him: "Come back here. I want you."

Mr. Marks hesitated, and then turned, and waited with evident uneasiness.

"You'll come and take a drink," said Burke.

Mr. Marks fingered the cigar in his hand nervously. "I'd like to, Hefty," he said, "but another time. I've got to see a man at the place. I've got an appointment with him. Some other night—hey? Got to hurry now."

"I'll go with you," said Burke, steadily.

Mr. Marks looked at him for the first time with sharp scrutiny, and laughed a low, comfortless laugh. He was a fat, oily person, with a face reddened by drink and the wind of the river. Burke towered beside him as they walked along, his face set and miserable. From one place to another and from one street corner to the next the two men walked and halted. Sometimes to speak to an acquaintance, sometimes to order something to drink, which both left untasted on the bar. As the hour wore on the nervousness of the older man became obvious, and at last, in a saloon near the Battery, he slipped quickly through a side entrance and

ran into the night. The next moment Burke was at his side.

"Here, you had better not try that on," he growled, and dropped into step again.

Mr. Marks stopped and drew a long breath. "Well, you make me tired, Burke," he said, desperately. It was his first sign of rebellion, and Burke welcomed it. "What are you after, hey?" Marks demanded. "What is it going to be? You're stopping all my fun," he went on, fiercely, "and you don't seem to be getting anything out of it yourself. What do you want of me, anyway, trailing me all over the place?"

They were at the end of a pier and quite alone. Burke looked about him carefully, and then turned toward the water where the *Liverpool* lay, a black, dim silhouette in the moonlight. The night mist was rising and it was growing colder. The place was quite deserted.

"Oh," said Burke, with unaffected carelessness, "I don't know wot you are up to, and I'll stay by you till I do. That's all."

Mr. Marks regarded him with fierce suspicion, and broke the silence at last with an angry oath. "I suppose you want me to divide —hey?" he cried, viciously. He looked at his watch, and snapped the lid with a sharp click. "It's that or letting it all go," he said. "Curse you for a meddling fool!" He stamped his feet

and clinched his fat hands impotently. "I'd ha' been aboard her by this time if it hadn't been for you."

Burke raised his eyes slowly toward the steamer, and saw that the smoke was coming out of the *Liverpool's* funnel in a thick black cloud. It gave his heart a sudden sharp wrench, and he glanced about him with a look which sobered his companion instantly.

"See here, Hefty, my lad," he whined, in a low, conciliatory tone, "we've got to work quick if we're going to stop her. They've got the anchors up now, most like. Here," he exclaimed, with an apparent burst of generosity, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go halves with you—that's three thousand dollars sure. Three thousand—think of that. It's a fortune."

Burke regarded him with a look of slow amazement. "Three thousand dollars," he said, stupidly.

"Yes, easy that," begged the other. "There's twelve thousand dollars' worth of stuff on her altogether, counting the Hotchkiss guns and the ammunition. The informer gets half. That's *law*. There's no getting out of that. It's *law*. They've *got* to give it to you, and it's honest money, too. What right have them half-breeds coming up here involving us Americans in their d——d revolutions? It's against

the courtesy of nations—that's what it is. I read it all up, and I know what I'm givin' ye. They can't do it. Look at the *Alliance* case, and the *Mary Miller*. Levy got five thousand dollars for giving *her* away, and I'd ha' pulled six thousand out of this if you'd let me alone. Well, speak up; what do you say?"

Burke was leaning forward, with his eyes staring into those of his companion. He was breathing heavily. "Wot are you going to do?" he asked quietly. His voice was low and uncertain.

Marks caught him familiarly by the sleeve. "Do?" he asked, trembling with excitement; "go to the *Washington*—she's at her slip there beyond the fire-boat—and tell the captain what we know. He can stop her before she reaches the lower bay, and he may if he believes what we say. And he has got to believe me, because one of the crew give me all the figures, and where they got the stuff, and who paid for it. It's Alvarez himself, the brother to the one they run out of the country—him as wants to be President. Come!" he cried, frantically, and dancing from one foot to the other in his excitement.

But Burke stood still, regarding him stupidly. "Three thousand dollars. For me," he said. "I don't understand."

"Hully gee!" cried the other. "Don't I tell you we get half! The government gets one-half the cargo and the informer gets the rest. That's the law. Think of it—three thousand dollars! Why, man alive, you can marry on that; and it's good money, too, come by honest for serving your country. Old man Casey will be proud of you, Hefty—and—and Mary too, hey, she——"

"Shut up!" said Burke, savagely. He glanced with a troubled look to where the revenue-cutter *Washington* lay at the end of the Barge Office dock. It was so very near. He stood rigid, breathing quickly, and with only his fingers working at his side. The other watched him with evil, wide-open eyes. Then Burke gave a short gasp of relief, and, reaching out suddenly, caught Marks by the sleeve. "Come with me," he said steadily. "Come over here and sit down."

"Sit down? Like hell!" cried the other fearfully. "What ails you? Don't you see she's got steam on now? She'll be out of the river before——"

"You're not going to the *Washington*," said Burke. "You're not going to give nothing away. You are going to stay here with me. There's—there's friends of mine on board that boat. They're not hurting you, and you're not

going to hurt them, nor interfere with them neither—see? You'll stay right here." Mr. Marks's face was black, and the muscles working with excitement and the fear of losing what he already considered his. "I mean," said Burke, firmly, "that you're going to stay here until that boat gets out of the harbor, till she gets clean off. Do you understand? That's wot I mean."

"Oh," said the other, softly, "that's what you mean, is it?"

He jerked his sleeve away, and his arm rose suddenly in the air, and Burke caught it by the wrist and tripped him up with a quick jerk that threw him heavily over on his back. Burke threw himself on his chest and wrenched at the knife in his hand.

"You would, would you," he said, under his breath. "Give it up—do you hear? Give it up," he growled, "or I'll——"

The fat little man beneath him groaned and struggled helplessly under his weight. "Let me up," he gasped; "I'm choking—let me up."

Burke tossed the knife into the river, and settled his fingers carefully round the other's throat. "Lie still," he whispered. "If you yell or nothing I'll choke the life out of you and leave you lying here——"

But even as he uttered this threat Mr. Burke

raised his eyes to the bay, and gave a soft, low cry. The smoke was pouring in a black mass from the funnel of the *Liverpool*, and as he watched her she started slowly forward, as a sled slides over the ice, and then moved more and more swiftly until the smoke stood out in a straight line and she grew less and less distinct, until, after passing the base of the great Statue of Liberty, she disappeared into the mist and out of his sight forever.

The man beneath him groaned feebly and cursed him under his breath.

"You can get up," said Burke gently, with his eyes still staring into the mist. "She's gone now."

THE CYNICAL MISS CATHERWAIGHT

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Miss Catherwaight's collection of orders and decorations and medals was her chief offense in the eyes of those of her dear friends who thought her clever but cynical.

All of them were willing to admit that she was clever, but some of them said she was clever only to be unkind.

Young Van Bibber had said that if Miss Catherwaight did not like dances and days and teas, she had only to stop going to them instead of making unpleasant remarks about those who did. So many people repeated this that young Van Bibber believed finally that he had said something good, and was somewhat pleased in consequence, as he was not much given to that sort of thing.

Mrs. Catherwaight, while she was alive, lived solely for society, and, so some people said, not only lived but died for it. She certainly did go about a great deal, and she used to carry her husband away from his library every night of every season and left him standing in the doorways of drawing-rooms, outwardly courteous

and distinguished-looking, but inwardly somnolent and unhappy. She was a born and trained social leader, and her daughter's coming out was to have been the greatest effort of her life. She regarded it as an event in the dear child's lifetime second only in importance to her birth, equally important with her probable marriage and of much more poignant interest than her possible death. But the great effort proved too much for the mother, and she died, fondly remembered by her peers and tenderly referred to by a great many people who could not even show a card for her Thursdays. Her husband and her daughter were not going out, of necessity, for more than a year after her death, and then felt no inclination to begin over again, but lived very much together and showed themselves only occasionally.

They entertained, though, a great deal, in the way of dinners, and an invitation to one of these dinners soon became a diploma for intellectual as well as social qualifications of a very high order.

One was always sure of meeting some one of consideration there, which was pleasant in itself, and also rendered it easy to let one's friends know where one had been dining. It sounded so flat to boast abruptly, "I dined at the Catherwaights' last night," while it seemed only

natural to remark, "That reminds me of a story that novelist, what's his name, told at Mr. Catherwaight's," or "That English chap, who's been in Africa, was at the Catherwaights' the other night, and told me——"

After one of these dinners people always asked to be allowed to look over Miss Catherwaight's collection, of which almost everybody had heard. It consisted of over a hundred medals and decorations which Miss Catherwaight had purchased while on the long tours she made with her father in all parts of the world. Each of them had been given as a reward for some public service, as a recognition of some virtue of the highest order—for personal bravery, for statesmanship, for great genius in the arts; and each had been pawned by the recipient or sold outright. Miss Catherwaight referred to them as her collection of dishonored honors, and called them variously her Orders of the Knights of the Almighty Dollar, pledges to patriotism and the pawnshops, and honors at second-hand.

It was her particular fad to get as many of these together as she could, and to know the story of each. The less creditable the story, the more highly she valued the medal. People might think it was not a pretty hobby for a young girl, but they could not help smiling at

the stories and at the scorn with which she told them.

"These," she would say, "are crosses of the Legion of Honor; they are of the lowest degree, that of chevalier. I keep them in this cigar box to show how cheaply I got them and how cheaply I hold them. I think you can get them here in New York for ten dollars; they cost more than that—about a hundred francs—in Paris. At second-hand, of course. The French government can imprison you, you know, for ten years, if you wear one without the right to do so, but they have no punishment for those who choose to part with them for a mess of pottage.

"All these," she would run on, "are English war medals. See, on this one is 'Alma,' 'Balaclava,' and 'Sebastopol.' He was quite a veteran, was he not? Well, he sold this to a dealer on Wardour Street, London, for five and six. You can get any number of them on the Bowery for their weight in silver. I tried very hard to get a Victoria Cross when I was in England, and I only succeeded in getting this one after a great deal of trouble. They value the cross so highly, you know, that it is the only other decoration in the case which holds the Order of the Garter in the Jewel Room at the Tower. It is made of copper, so that its intrinsic value won't have any weight with the man

who gets it, but I bought this, nevertheless, for five pounds. The soldier to whom it belonged had loaded and fired a cannon all alone when the rest of the men about the battery had run away. He was captured by the enemy, but retaken immediately afterward by reinforcements from his own side, and the general in command recommended him to the Queen for decoration. He sold his cross to the proprietor of a curiosity shop and drank himself to death. I felt rather meanly about keeping it and hunted up his widow to return it to her, but she said I could have it for a consideration.

"This gold medal was given, as you see, to 'Hiram J. Stillman, of the sloop *Annie Barker*, for saving the crew of the steamship *Olivia*, June 18, 1888,' by the President of the United States and both houses of Congress. I found it on Baxter Street in a pawnshop. The gallant Hiram J. had pawned it for sixteen dollars and never came back to claim it."

"But, Miss Catherwaight," some optimist would object, "these men undoubtedly did do something brave and noble once. You can't get back of that; and they didn't do it for a medal, either, but because it was their duty. And so the medal meant nothing to them; their conscience told them they had done the right thing; they didn't need a stamped coin to re-

mind them of it, or of their wounds, either, perhaps."

"Quite right; that's quite true," Miss Catherwaight would say. "But how about this? Look at this gold medal with the diamonds: 'Presented to Colonel James F. Placerl by the men of his regiment, in camp before Richmond.' Every soldier in the regiment gave something toward that, and yet the brave gentleman put it up at a game of poker one night, and the officer who won it sold it to the man who gave it to me. Can you defend that?"

Miss Catherwaight was well known to the proprietors of the pawnshops and loan offices on the Bowery and Park Row. They learned to look for her once a month, and saved what medals they received for her, and tried to learn their stories from the people who pawned them, or else invented some story which they hoped would answer just as well.

Though her brougham produced a sensation in the unfashionable streets into which she directed it, she was never annoyed. Her maid went with her into the shops, and one of the grooms always stood at the door within call, to the intense delight of the neighborhood. And one day she found what, from her point of view, was a perfect gem. It was a poor, cheap-looking, tarnished silver medal, a half-dollar

once, undoubtedly, beaten out roughly into the shape of a heart and engraved in script by the jeweller of some country town. On one side were two clasped hands with a wreath around them, and on the reverse was this inscription: "From Henry Burgoyne to his beloved friend Lewis L. Lockwood," and below, "Through prosperity and adversity." That was all. And here it was among razors and pistols and family Bibles in a pawnbroker's window. What a story there was in that! These two boy friends and their boyish friendship that was to withstand adversity and prosperity, and all that remained of it was this inscription to its memory like the wording on a tomb!

"He couldn't have got so much on it, anyway," said the pawnbroker, entering into her humor. "I didn't lend him more'n a quarter of a dollar at the most."

Miss Catherwaight stood wondering if the Lewis L. Lockwood could be Lewis Lockwood, the lawyer one read so much about. Then she remembered his middle name was Lyman, and said quickly, "I'll take it, please."

She stepped into the carriage, and told the man to go find a directory and look for Lewis Lyman Lockwood. The groom returned in a few minutes and said there was such a name down in the book as a lawyer, and that his office was

such a number on Broadway; it must be near Liberty. "Go there," said Miss Catherwaight.

Her determination was made so quickly that they had stopped in front of a huge pile of offices, sandwiched in, one above the other, until they towered mountains high, before she had quite settled in her mind what she wanted to know, or had appreciated how strange her errand might appear. Mr. Lockwood was out, one of the young men in the outer office said, but the junior partner, Mr. Latimer, was in and would see her. She had only time to remember that the junior partner was a dancing acquaintance of hers, before young Mr. Latimer stood before her smiling, and with her card in his hand.

"Mr. Lockwood is out just at present, Miss Catherwaight," he said, "but he will be back in a moment. Won't you come into the other room and wait? I'm sure he won't be away over five minutes. Or is it something I could do?"

She saw that he was surprised to see her, and a little ill at ease as to just how to take her visit. He tried to make it appear that he considered it the most natural thing in the world, but he overdid it, and she saw that her presence was something quite out of the common. This did not tend to set her any more at her ease.

She already regretted the step she had taken. What if it should prove to be the same Lockwood, she thought, and what would they think of her?

"Perhaps you will do better than Mr. Lockwood," she said, as she followed him into the inner office. "I fear I have come upon a very foolish errand, and one that has nothing at all to do with the law."

"Not a breach of promise suit, then?" said young Latimer, with a smile. "Perhaps it is only an innocent subscription to a most worthy charity. I was afraid at first," he went on lightly, "that it was legal redress you wanted, and I was hoping that the way I led the Courdert's cotillon had made you think I could conduct you through the mazes of the law as well."

"No," returned Miss Catherwaight, with a nervous laugh; "it has to do with my unfortunate collection. This is what brought me here," she said, holding out the silver medal. "I came across it just now in the Bowery. The name was the same, and I thought it just possible Mr. Lockwood would like to have it; or, to tell you the truth, that he might tell me what had become of the Henry Burgoyne who gave it to him."

Young Latimer had the medal in his hand before she had finished speaking, and was ex-

amining it carefully. He looked up with just a touch of color in his cheeks and straightened himself visibly.

"Please don't be offended," said the fair collector. "I know what you think. You've heard of my stupid collection, and I know you think I meant to add this to it. But, indeed, now that I have had time to think—you see I came here immediately from the pawnshop, and I was so interested, like all collectors, you know, that I didn't stop to consider. That's the worst of a hobby; it carries one rough-shod over other people's feelings, and runs away with one. I beg of you, if you do know anything about the coin, just to keep it and don't tell me, and I assure you what little I know I will keep quite to myself."

Young Latimer bowed, and stood looking at her curiously, with the medal in his hand.

"I hardly know what to say," he began slowly. "It really has a story. You say you found this on the Bowery, in a pawnshop. Indeed! Well, of course, you know Mr. Lockwood could not have left it there."

Miss Catherwaight shook her head vehemently and smiled in deprecation.

"This medal was in his safe when he lived on Thirty-fifth Street at the time he was robbed, and the burglars took this with the rest of the

silver and pawned it, I suppose. Mr. Lockwood would have given more for it than any one else could have afforded to pay." He paused a moment, and then continued more rapidly: "Henry Burgoyne is Judge Burgoyne. Ah! you didn't guess that? Yes, Mr. Lockwood and he were friends when they were boys. They went to school in Westchester County. They were Damon and Pythias and that sort of thing. They roomed together at the State college and started to practise law in Tuckahoe as a firm, but they made nothing of it, and came on to New York and began reading law again with Fuller & Mowbray. It was while they were at school that they had these medals made. There was a mate to this, you know; Judge Burgoyne had it. Well, they continued to live and work together. They were both orphans and dependent on themselves. I suppose that was one of the strongest bonds between them; and they knew no one in New York, and always spent their spare time together. They were pretty poor, I fancy, from all Mr. Lockwood has told me, but they were very ambitious. They were—I'm telling you this, you understand, because it concerns you somewhat: well, more or less. They were great sportsmen, and whenever they could get away from the law office they would go off shooting.

I think they were fonder of each other than brothers even. I've heard Mr. Lockwood tell of the days they lay in the rushes along the Chesapeake Bay waiting for duck. He has said often that they were the happiest hours of his life. That was their greatest pleasure, going off together after duck or snipe along the Maryland waters. Well, they grew rich and began to know people; and then they met a girl. It seems they both thought a great deal of her, as half the New York men did, I am told; and she was the reigning belle and toast, and had other admirers, and neither met with that favor she showed—well, the man she married, for instance. But for a while each thought, for some reason or other, that he was especially favored. I don't know anything about it. Mr. Lockwood never spoke of it to me. But they both fell very deeply in love with her, and each thought the other disloyal, and so they quarrelled; and—and then, though the woman married, the two men kept apart. It was the one great passion of their lives, and both were proud, and each thought the other in the wrong, and so they have kept apart ever since. And —well, I believe that is all."

Miss Catherwaight had listened in silence and with one little gloved hand tightly clasping the other.

"Indeed, Mr. Latimer, indeed," she began, tremulously, "I am terribly ashamed of myself. I seemed to have rushed in where angels fear to tread. I wouldn't meet Mr. Lockwood *now* for worlds. Of course I might have known there was a woman in the case, it adds so much to the story. But I suppose I must give up my medal. I never could tell that story, could I?"

"No," said young Latimer, dryly; "I wouldn't if I were you."

Something in his tone, and something in the fact that he seemed to avoid her eyes, made her drop the lighter vein in which she had been speaking, and rise to go. There was much that he had not told her, she suspected, and when she bade him good-by it was with a reserve which she had not shown at any other time during their interview.

"I wonder who that woman was?" she murmured, as young Latimer turned from the brougham door and said, "Home," to the groom. She thought about it a great deal that afternoon; at times she repented that she had given up the medal, and at times she blushed that she should have been carried in her zeal into such an unwarranted intimacy with another's story.

She determined finally to ask her father about it. He would be sure to know, she thought, as

he and Mr. Lockwood were contemporaries. Then she decided finally not to say anything about it at all, for Mr. Catherwaight did not approve of the collection of dishonored honors as it was, and she had no desire to prejudice him still further by a recital of her afternoon's adventure, of which she had no doubt but he would also disapprove. So she was more than usually silent during the dinner, which was a tête-à-tête family dinner that night, and she allowed her father to doze after it in the library in his great chair without disturbing him with either questions or confessions.

They had been sitting there some time, he with his hands folded on the evening paper and with his eyes closed, when the servant brought in a card and offered it to Mr. Catherwaight. Mr. Catherwaight fumbled over his glasses, and read the name on the card aloud: "'Mr. Lewis L. Lockwood.' Dear me!" he said. "What can Mr. Lockwood be calling upon me about?"

Miss Catherwaight sat upright, and reached out for the card with a nervous, gasping little laugh.

"Oh, I think it must be for me," she said; "I'm quite sure it is intended for me. I was at his office to-day, you see, to return him some keepsake of his that I found in an old curiosity

shop. Something with his name on it that had been stolen from him and pawned. It was just a trifle. You needn't go down, dear; I'll see him. It was I he asked for, I'm sure; was it not, Morris?"

Morris was not quite sure; being such an old gentleman, he thought it must be for Mr. Catherwaight he'd come.

Mr. Catherwaight was not greatly interested. He did not like to disturb his after-dinner nap, and he settled back in his chair again and refolded his hands.

"I hardly thought he could have come to see me," he murmured, drowsily; "though I used to see enough and more than enough of Lewis Lockwood once, my dear," he added with a smile, as he opened his eyes and nodded before he shut them again. "That was before your mother and I were engaged, and people did say that young Lockwood's chances at that time were as good as mine. But they weren't, it seems. He was very attentive, though; *very* attentive."

Miss Catherwaight stood startled and motionless at the door from which she had turned.

"Attentive—to whom?" she asked quickly, and in a very low voice. "To my mother?"

Mr. Catherwaight did not deign to open his eyes this time, but moved his head uneasily as if he wished to be let alone.

"To your mother, of course, my child," he answered; "of whom else was I speaking?"

Miss Catherwaight went down the stairs to the drawing-room slowly, and paused half-way to allow this new suggestion to settle in her mind. There was something distasteful to her, something that seemed not altogether unblamable, in a woman's having two men quarrel about her, neither of whom was the woman's husband. And yet this girl of whom Latimer had spoken must be her mother, and she, of course, could do no wrong. It was very disquieting, and she went on down the rest of the way with one hand resting heavily on the railing and with the other pressed against her cheeks. She was greatly troubled. It now seemed to her very sad indeed that these two one-time friends should live in the same city and meet, as they must meet, and not recognize each other. She argued that her mother must have been very young when it happened, or she would have brought two such men together again. Her mother could not have known, she told herself; she was not to blame. For she felt sure that had she herself known of such an accident she would have done something, said something, to make it right. And she was not half the woman her mother had been, she was sure of that.

There was something very likable in the old

gentleman who came forward to greet her as she entered the drawing-room; something courtly and of the old school, of which she was so tired of hearing, but of which she wished she could have seen more in the men she met. Young Mr. Latimer had accompanied his guardian, exactly why she did not see, but she recognized his presence slightly. He seemed quite content to remain in the background. Mr. Lockwood, as she had expected, explained that he had called to thank her for the return of the medal. He had it in his hand as he spoke, and touched it gently with the tips of his fingers as though caressing it.

"I knew your father very well," said the lawyer, "and I at one time had the honor of being one of your mother's younger friends. That was before she was married, many years ago." He stopped and regarded the girl gravely and with a touch of tenderness. "You will pardon an old man, old enough to be your father, if he says," he went on, "that you are greatly like your mother, my dear young lady —greatly like. Your mother was very kind to me, and I fear I abused her kindness; abused it by misunderstanding it. There was a great deal of misunderstanding; and I was proud, and my friend was proud, and so the misunderstanding continued, until now it has become irretrievable."

He had forgotten her presence apparently, and was speaking more to himself than to her as he stood looking down at the medal in his hand.

"You were very thoughtful to give me this," he continued; "it was very good of you. I don't know why I should keep it though, now, although I was distressed enough when I lost it. But now it is only a reminder of a time that is past and put away, but which was very, very dear to me. Perhaps I should tell you that I had a misunderstanding with the friend who gave it to me, and since then we have never met; have ceased to know each other. But I have always followed his life as a judge and as a lawyer, and respected him for his own sake as a man. I cannot tell—I do not know how he feels toward me."

The old lawyer turned the medal over in his hand and stood looking down at it wistfully.

The cynical Miss Catherwaight could not stand it any longer.

"Mr. Lockwood," she said, impulsively, "Mr. Latimer has told me why you and your friend separated, and I cannot bear to think that it was she—my mother—should have been the cause. She could not have understood; she must have been innocent of any knowledge of the trouble she had brought to men who were

such good friends of hers and to each other. It seems to me as though my finding that coin is more than a coincidence. I somehow think that the daughter is to help undo the harm that her mother has caused—unwittingly caused. Keep the medal and don't give it back to me, for I am sure your friend has kept his, and I am sure he is still your friend at heart. Don't think I am speaking hastily or that I am thoughtless in what I am saying, but it seems to me as if friends—good, true friends—were so few that one cannot let them go without a word to bring them back. But though I am only a girl, and a very light and unfeeling girl, some people think, I feel this very much, and I do wish I could bring your old friend back to you again as I brought back his pledge."

"It has been many years since Henry Burgoyne and I have met," said the old man, slowly, "and it would be quite absurd to think that he still holds any trace of that foolish, boyish feeling of loyalty that we once had for each other. Yet I will keep this, if you will let me, and I thank you, my dear young lady, for what you have said. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are as good and as kind as your mother was, and—I can say nothing, believe me, in higher praise."

He rose slowly and made a movement as if

to leave the room, and then, as if the excitement of this sudden return into the past could not be shaken off so readily, he started forward with a move of sudden determination.

"I think," he said, "I will go to Henry Burgoyne's house at once, to-night. I will act on what you have suggested. I will see if this has or has not been one long, unprofitable mistake. If my visit should be fruitless, I will send you this coin to add to your collection of dishonored honors, but if it should result as I hope it may, it will be your doing, Miss Catherwaight, and two old men will have much to thank you for. Good-night," he said as he bowed above her hand, "and—God bless you!"

Miss Catherwaight flushed slightly at what he had said, and sat looking down at the floor for a moment after the door had closed behind him.

Young Mr. Latimer moved uneasily in his chair. The routine of the office had been strangely disturbed that day, and he now failed to recognize in the girl before him with reddened cheeks and trembling eyelashes the cold, self-possessed young woman of society whom he had formerly known.

"You have done very well, if you will let me say so," he began, gently. "I hope you are right in what you said, and that Mr. Lockwood will not meet with a rebuff or an ungra-

cious answer. Why," he went on quickly, "I have seen him take out his gun now every spring and every fall for the last ten years and clean and polish it and tell what great shots he and Henry, as he calls him, used to be. And then he would say he would take a holiday and get off for a little shooting. But he never went. He would put the gun back into its case again and mope in his library for days afterward. You see, he never married, and though he adopted me, in a manner, and is fond of me in a certain way, no one ever took the place in his heart his old friend had held."

"You will let me know, will you not, at once, —to-night, even—whether he succeeds or not?" said the cynical Miss Catherwaight. "You can understand why I am so deeply interested. I see now why you said I would not tell the story of that medal. But, after all, it may be the prettiest story, the only pretty story I have to tell."

Mr. Lockwood had not returned, the man said, when young Latimer reached the home the lawyer had made for them both. He did not know what to argue from this, but determined to sit up and wait, and so sat smoking before the fire and listening with his sense of hearing on a strain for the first movement at the door.

He had not long to wait. The front door shut with a clash, and he heard Mr. Lockwood crossing the hall quickly to the library, in which he waited. Then the inner door was swung back, and Mr. Lockwood came in with his head high and his eyes smiling brightly.

There was something in his step that had not been there before, something light and vigorous, and he looked ten years younger. He crossed the room to his writing-table without speaking and began tossing the papers about on his desk. Then he closed the rolling-top lid with a snap and looked up smiling.

"I shall have to ask you to look after things at the office for a little while," he said. "Judge Burgoyne and I are going to Maryland for a few weeks' shooting."

"THERE WERE NINETY AND NINE"

"THERE WERE NINETY AND NINE"

YOUNG HARRINGFORD, or the "Goodwood Plunger," as he was perhaps better known at that time, had come to Monte Carlo in a very different spirit and in a very different state of mind from any in which he had ever visited the place before. He had come there for the same reason that a wounded lion, or a poisoned rat, for that matter, crawls away into a corner, that it may be alone when it dies. He stood leaning against one of the pillars of the Casino with his back to the moonlight, and with his eyes blinking painfully at the flaming lamps above the green tables inside. He knew they would be put out very soon; and as he had something to do then, he regarded them fixedly with painful earnestness, as a man who is condemned to die at sunrise watches through his barred windows for the first gray light of the morning.

That queer, numb feeling in his head and the sharp line of pain between his eyebrows which had been growing worse for the last three weeks, was troubling him more terribly than ever before, and his nerves had thrown off

all control and rioted at the base of his head and at his wrists, and jerked and twitched as though, so it seemed to him, they were striving to pull the tired body into pieces and to set themselves free. He was wondering whether if he should take his hand from his pocket and touch his head he would find that it had grown longer, and had turned into a soft, spongy mass which would give beneath his fingers. He considered this for some time, and even went so far as to half withdraw one hand, but thought better of it and shoved it back again as he considered how much less terrible it was to remain in doubt than to find that this phenomenon had actually taken place.

The pity of the whole situation was, that the boy was only a boy with all his man's miserable knowledge of the world, and the reason of it all was, that he had entirely too much heart and not enough money to make an unsuccessful gambler. If he had only been able to lose his conscience instead of his money, or even if he had kept his conscience and won, it is not likely that he would have been waiting for the lights to go out at Monte Carlo. But he had not only lost all of his money and more besides, which he could never make up, but he had lost other things which meant much more to him now than money, and which could not be made

up or paid back at even usurious interest. He had not only lost the right to sit at his father's table, but the right to think of the girl whose place in Surrey ran next to that of his own people, and whose lighted window in the north wing he had watched on those many dreary nights when she had been ill, from his own terrace across the trees in the park. And all he had gained was the notoriety that made him a by-word with decent people, and the hero of the race-tracks and the music-halls. He was no longer "Young Harringford, the eldest son of the Harringfords of Surrey," but the "Goodwood Plunger," to whom Fortune had made desperate love and had then jilted, and mocked, and overthrown.

As he looked back at it now and remembered himself as he was then, it seemed as though he was considering an entirely distinct and separate personage—a boy of whom he liked to think, who had had strong, healthy ambitions and gentle tastes. He reviewed it passionlessly as he stood staring at the lights inside the Casino, as clearly as he was capable of doing in his present state and with miserable interest. How he had laughed when young Norton told him in boyish confidence that there was a horse named Siren in his father's stables which would win the Goodwood Cup; how, having gone

down to see Norton's people when the long vacation began, he had seen Siren daily, and had talked of her until two every morning in the smoking-room, and had then stayed up two hours later to watch her take her trial spin over the downs. He remembered how they used to stamp back over the long grass wet with dew, comparing watches and talking of the time in whispers, and said good-night as the sun broke over the trees in the park. And then just at this time of all others, when the horse was the only interest of those around him, from Lord Norton and his whole household down to the youngest stable-boy and oldest gaffer in the village, he had come into his money.

And then began the then and still inexplicable plunge into gambling, and the wagering of greater sums than the owner of Siren dared to risk himself, the secret backing of the horse through commissioners all over England, until the boy by his single fortune had brought the odds against her from 60 to 0 down to 6 to 0. He recalled, with a thrill that seemed to settle his nerves for the moment, the little black specks at the starting-post and the larger specks as the horses turned the first corner. The rest of the people on the coach were making a great deal of noise, he remembered, but he, who had

more to lose than any one or all of them together, had stood quite still with his feet on the wheel and his back against the box-seat, and with his hands sunk into his pockets and the nails cutting through his gloves. The specks grew into horses with bits of color on them, and then the deep muttering roar of the crowd merged into one great shout, and swelled and grew into sharper, quicker, impatient cries, as the horses turned into the stretch with only their head showing toward the goal. Some of the people were shouting, "Firefly!" and others were calling on "Vixen!" and others, who had their glasses up, cried, "Trouble leads!" but he only waited until he could distinguish the Norton colors, with his lips pressed tightly together. Then they came so close that their hoofs echoed as loudly as when horses gallop over a bridge, and from among the leaders Siren's beautiful head and shoulders showed like sealskin in the sun, and the boy on her back leaned forward and touched her gently with his hand, as they had so often seen him do on the downs, and Siren, as though he had touched a spring, leaped forward with her head shooting back and out, like a piston-rod that has broken loose from its fastening and beats the air, while the jockey sat motionless, with his right arm hanging at his side as limply as though it were broken, and

with his left moving forward and back in time with the desperate strokes of the horse's head.

"Siren wins!" cried Lord Norton, with a grim smile, and "Siren!" the mob shouted back with wonder and angry disappointment, and "Siren!" the hills echoed from far across the course. Young Harringford felt as if he had suddenly been lifted into heaven after three months of purgatory, and smiled uncertainly at the excited people on the coach about him. It made him smile even now when he recalled young Norton's flushed face and the awe and reproach in his voice when he climbed up and whispered, "Why, Cecil, they say in the ring you've won a fortune, and you never told us." And how Griffith, the biggest of the bookmakers, with the rest of them at his back, came up to him and touched his hat resentfully, and said, "You'll have to give us time, sir; I'm very hard hit"; and how the crowd stood about him and looked at him curiously, and the Certain Royal Personage turned and said, "Who —not that boy, surely?" Then how, on the day following, the papers told of the young gentleman who of all others had won a fortune, thousands and thousands of pounds they said, getting back sixty for every one he had ventured; and pictured him in baby clothes with the cup in his arms, or in an Eton jacket; and

how all of them spoke of him slightingly, or admiringly, as the "Goodwood Plunger."

He did not care to go on after that; to recall the mortification of his father, whose pride was hurt and whose hopes were dashed by this sudden, mad freak of fortune, nor how he railed at it and provoked him until the boy rebelled and went back to the courses, where he was a celebrity and a king.

The rest is a very common story. Fortune and greater fortune at first; days in which he could not lose, days in which he drove back to the crowded inns choked with dust, sunburnt, and fagged with excitement, to a riotous supper and baccarat, and afterward went to sleep only to see cards and horses and moving crowds and clouds of dust; days spent in a short covert coat, with a field-glass over his shoulder, and with a pasteboard ticket dangling from his buttonhole; and then came the change that brought conscience up again, and the visits to the Jews, and the slights of the men who had never been his friends, but who, he had thought, had at least liked him for himself, even if he did not like them; and then debts, and more debts, and the borrowing of money to pay here and there, and threats of executions; and, with it all, the longing for the fields and trout springs of Surrey and the walk across the park to where she

lived. This grew so strong that he wrote to his father, and was told briefly that he who was to have kept up the family name had dragged it into the dust of the race-courses, and had changed it at his own wish to that of the Boy Plunger—and that the breach was irreconcilable.

Then this queer feeling came on, and he wondered why he could not eat, and why he shivered even when the room was warm or the sun shining, and the fear came upon him that with all this trouble and disgrace his head might give way, and then that it had given way. This came to him at all times, and lately more frequently and with a fresher, more cruel thrill of terror, and he began to watch himself and note how he spoke, and to repeat over what he had said to see if it were sensible, and to question himself as to why he laughed, and at what. It was not a question of whether it would or would not be cowardly; it was simply a necessity. The thing had to be stopped. He had to have rest and sleep and peace again. He had boasted in those reckless, prosperous days that if by any possible chance he should lose his money he would drive a hansom, or emigrate to the colonies, or take the shilling. He had no patience in those days with men who could not live on in adversity, and who were

found in the gun-room with a hole in their heads, and whose family asked their polite friends to believe that a man used to firearms from his school-days had tried to load a hair-trigger revolver with the muzzle pointed at his forehead. He had expressed a fine contempt for those men then, but now he had forgotten all that, and thought only of the relief it would bring, and not how others might suffer by it. If he did consider this, it was only to conclude that they would quite understand, and be glad that his pain and fear were over.

Then he planned a grand *coup* which was to pay off all his debts and give him a second chance to present himself a supplicant at his father's house. If it failed, he would have to stop this queer feeling in his head at once. The Grand Prix and the English horse was the final *coup*. On this depended everything—the return of his fortunes, the reconciliation with his father, and the possibility of meeting her again. It was a very hot day he remembered, and very bright; but the tall poplars on the road to the races seemed to stop growing just at a level with his eyes. Below that it was clear enough, but all above seemed black—as though a cloud had fallen and was hanging just over the people's heads. He thought of speaking of this to his man Walters, who had followed his fortunes

from the first, but decided not to do so, for, as it was, he had noticed that Walters had observed him closely of late, and had seemed to spy upon him. The race began, and he looked through his glass for the English horse in the front and could not find her, and the Frenchman beside him cried, "Frou Frou!" as Frou Frou passed the goal. He lowered his glasses slowly and unscrewed them very carefully before dropping them back into the case; then he buckled the strap and turned and looked about him. Two Frenchmen who had won a hundred francs between them were jumping and dancing at his side. He remembered wondering why they did not speak in English. Then the sunlight changed to a yellow, nasty glare, as though a calcium light had been turned on the glass and colors, and he pushed his way back to his carriage, leaning heavily on the servant's arm, and drove slowly back to Paris, with the driver flecking his horses fretfully with his whip, for he had wished to wait and see the end of the races.

He had selected Monte Carlo as the place for it, because it was more unlike his home than any other spot, and because one summer night, when he had crossed the lawn from the Casino to the hotel with a gay party of young men and women, they had come across something under

a bush which they took to be a dog or a man asleep, and one of the men had stepped forward and touched it with his foot, and had then turned sharply and said, "Take those girls away"; and while some hurried the women back, frightened and curious, he and the others had picked up the body and found it to be that of a young Russian whom they had just seen losing, with a very bad grace, at the tables. There was no passion in his face now, and his evening dress was quite unruffled, and only a black spot on the shirt front showed where the powder had burnt the linen. It had made a great impression on him then, for he was at the height of his fortunes, with crowds of sycophantic friends and a retinue of dependents at his heels. And now that he was quite alone and disinherited by even these sorry companions, there seemed no other escape from the pain in his brain but to end it, and he sought this place of all others as the most fitting place in which to die.

So, after Walters had given the proper papers and checks to the commissioner who handled his debts for him, he left Paris and took the first train for Monte Carlo, sitting at the window of the carriage, and beating a nervous tattoo on the pane with his ring until the old gentleman at the other end of the compartment

scowled at him. But Harringford did not see him, nor the trees and fields as they swept by, and it was not until Walters came and said, "You get out here, sir," that he recognized the yellow station and the great hotels on the hill above. It was half-past eleven, and the lights in the Casino were still burning brightly. He wondered whether he would have time to go over to the hotel and write a letter to his father and to her. He decided, after some difficult consideration, that he would not. There was nothing to say that they did not know already, or that they would fail to understand. But this suggested to him that what they had written to him must be destroyed at once, before any stranger could claim the right to read it. He took his letters from his pocket and looked them over carefully. They were most unpleasant reading. They all seemed to be about money; some begged to remind him of this or that debt, of which he had thought continuously for the last month, while others were abusive and insolent. Each of them gave him actual pain. One was the last letter he had received from his father just before leaving Paris, and though he knew it by heart, he read it over again for the last time. That it came too late, that it asked what he knew now to be impossible, made it none the less grateful

to him, but that it offered peace and a welcome home made it all the more terrible.

"I came to take this step through young Hargraves, the new curate," his father wrote, "though he was but the instrument in the hands of Providence. He showed me the error of my conduct toward you, and proved to me that my duty and the inclination of my heart were toward the same end. He read this morning for the second lesson the story of the Prodigal Son, and I heard it without recognition and with no present application until he came to the verse which tells how the father came to his son 'when he was yet a great way off.' He saw him, it says, 'when he was yet a great way off,' and ran to meet him. He did not wait for the boy to knock at his gate and beg to be let in, but went out to meet him, and took him in his arms and led him back to his home. Now, my boy, my son, it seems to me as if you had never been so far off from me as you are at this present time, as if you had never been so greatly separated from me in every thought and interest; we are even worse than strangers, for you think that my hand is against you, that I have closed the door of your home to you and driven you away. But what I have done I beg of you to forgive: to forget what I may have said in the past, and only to think

of what I say now. Your brothers are good boys and have been good sons to me, and God knows I am thankful for such sons, and thankful to them for bearing themselves as they have done.

"But, my boy, my first-born, my little Cecil, they can never be to me what you have been. I can never feel for them as I feel for you; they are the ninety and nine who have never wandered away upon the mountains, and who have never been tempted, and have never left their home for either good or evil. But you, Cecil, though you have made my heart ache until I thought and even hoped it would stop beating, and though you have given me many, many nights that I could not sleep, are still dearer to me than anything else in the world. You are the flesh of my flesh and the bone of my bone, and I cannot bear living on without you. I cannot be at rest here, or look forward contentedly to a rest hereafter, unless you are by me and hear me, unless I can see your face and touch you and hear your laugh in the halls. Come back to me, Cecil; to Harringford and the people that know you best, and know what is best in you and love you for it. I can have only a few more years here now when you will take my place and keep up my name. I will not be here to trouble you much longer; but,

my boy, while I am here, come to me and make me happy for the rest of my life. There are others who need you, Cecil. You know whom I mean. I saw her only yesterday, and she asked me of you with such splendid disregard for what the others standing by might think, and as though she dared me or them to say or even imagine anything against you. You cannot keep away from us both much longer. Surely not; you will come back and make us happy for the rest of our lives."

The Goodwood Plunger turned his back to the lights so that the people passing could not see his face, and tore the letter up slowly and dropped it piece by piece over the balcony. "If I could," he whispered; "if I could." The pain was a little worse than usual just then, but it was no longer a question of inclination. He felt only this desire to stop these thoughts and doubts and the physical tremor that shook him. To rest and sleep, that was what he must have, and peace. There was no peace at home or anywhere else while this thing lasted. He could not see why they worried him in this way. It was quite impossible. He felt much more sorry for them than for himself, but only because they could not understand. He was quite sure that if they could feel what he suffered they would help him, even to end it.

He had been standing for some time with his back to the light, but now he turned to face it, and to take up his watch again. He felt quite sure the lights would not burn much longer. As he turned, a woman came forward from out the lighted hall, hovered uncertainly before him, and then made a silent salutation, which was something between a courtesy and a bow. That she was a woman and rather short and plainly dressed, and that her bobbing up and down annoyed him, was all that he realized of her presence, and he quite failed to connect her movements with himself in any way. "Sir," she said in French, "I beg your pardon, but might I speak with you?" The Goodwood Plunger possessed a somewhat various knowledge of Monte Carlo and its *habitués*. It was not the first time that women who had lost at the tables had begged a napoleon from him, or asked the distinguished child of fortune what color or combination she should play. That, in his luckier days, had happened often and had amused him, but now he moved back irritably and wished that the figure in front of him would disappear as it had come.

"I am in great trouble, sir," the woman said. "I have no friends here, sir, to whom I may apply. I am very bold, but my anxiety is very great."

The Goodwood Plunger raised his hat slightly

and bowed. Then he concentrated his eyes with what was a distinct effort on the queer little figure hovering in front of him, and stared very hard. She wore an odd piece of red coral for a brooch, and by looking steadily at this he brought the rest of the figure into focus and saw, without surprise,—for every commonplace seemed strange to him now, and everything peculiar quite a matter of course,—that she was distinctly not an *habituée* of the place, and looked more like a lady's maid than an adventuress. She was French and pretty—such a girl as might wait in a Duval restaurant or sit as a cashier behind a little counter near the door.

"We should not be here," she said, as if in answer to his look and in apology for her presence. "But Louis, my husband, he would come. I told him that this was not for such as we are, but Louis is so bold. He said that upon his marriage tour he would live with the best, and so here he must come to play as the others do. We have been married, sir, only since Tuesday, and we must go back to Paris to-morrow; they would give him only the three days. He is not a gambler; he plays dominoes at the cafés, it is true. But what will you? He is young and with so much spirit, and I know that you, sir, who are so fortunate and who understand so well how to control these

tables, I know that you will persuade him. He will not listen to me; he is so greatly excited and so little like himself. You will help me, sir, will you not? You will speak to him?"

The Goodwood Plunger knit his eyebrows and closed the lids once or twice, and forced the mistiness and pain out of his eyes. It was most annoying. The woman seemed to be talking a great deal and to say very much, but he could not make sense of it. He moved his shoulders slightly. "I can't understand," he said wearily, turning away.

"It is my husband," the woman said anxiously; "Louis, he is playing at the table inside, and he is only an apprentice to old Carbut the baker, but he owns a third of the store. It was my *dot* that paid for it," she added proudly. "Old Carbut says he may have it all for 20,000 francs, and then old Carbut will retire, and we will be proprietors. We have saved a little, and we had counted to buy the rest in five or six years if we were very careful."

"I see, I see," said the Plunger, with a little short laugh of relief; "I understand." He was greatly comforted to think that it was not so bad as it had threatened. He saw her distinctly now and followed what she said quite easily, and even such a small matter as talking with this woman seemed to help him.

"He is gambling," he said, "and losing the money, and you come to me to advise him what to play. I understand. Well, tell him he will lose what little he has left; tell him I advise him to go home; tell him——"

"No, no!" the girl said excitedly; "you do not understand; he has not lost, he has won. He has won, oh, so many rolls of money, but he will not stop. Do you not see? He has won as much as we could earn in many months —in many years, sir, by saving and working, oh, so very hard! And now he risks it again, and I cannot force him away. But if you, sir, if you would tell him how great the chances are against him, if you who know would tell him how foolish he is not to be content with what he has, he would listen. He says to me, 'Bah! you are a woman'; and he is so red and fierce; he is imbecile with the sight of the money, but he will listen to a grand gentleman like you. He thinks to win more and more, and he thinks to buy another third from old Carbut. Is it not foolish? It is so wicked of him."

"Oh, yes," said the Goodwood Plunger, nodding, "I see now. You want me to take him away so that he can keep what he has. I see; but I don't know him. He will not listen to me, you know; I have no right to interfere."

He turned away, rubbing his hand across his

forehead. He wished so much that this woman would leave him by himself.

"Ah, but, sir," cried the girl, desperately, and touching his coat, "you who are so fortunate, and so rich, and of the great world, you cannot feel what this is to me. To have my own little shop and to be free, and not to slave, and sew, and sew until my back and fingers burn with the pain. Speak to him, sir; ah, speak to him! It is so easy a thing to do, and he will listen to you."

The Goodwood Plunger turned again abruptly. "Where is he?" he said. "Point him out to me."

The woman ran ahead, with a murmur of gratitude, to the open door and pointed to where her husband was standing leaning over and placing some money on one of the tables. He was a handsome young Frenchman, as *bourgeois* as his wife, and now terribly alive and excited. In the self-contained air of the place and in contrast with the silence of the great hall he seemed even more conspicuously out of place. The Plunger touched him on the arm, and the Frenchman shoved the hand off impatiently and without looking around. The Plunger touched him again and forced him to turn toward him.

"Well!" said the Frenchman, quickly. "Well?"

"Madame, your wife," said Cecil, with the grave politeness of an old man, "has done me the honor to take me into her confidence. She tells me that you have won a great deal of money; that you could put it to good use at home, and so save yourselves much drudgery and debt, and all that sort of trouble. You are quite right if you say it is no concern of mine. It is not. But really, you know, there is a great deal of sense in what she wants, and you have apparently already won a large sum."

The Frenchman was visibly surprised at this approach. He paused for a second or two in some doubt, and even awe, for the disinherited one carried the mark of a personage of consideration and of one whose position is secure. Then he gave a short, unmirthful laugh.

"You are most kind, sir," he said with mock politeness and with an impatient shrug. "But madame, my wife, has not done well to interest a stranger in this affair, which, as you say, concerns you not."

He turned to the table again with a defiant swagger of independence, and placed two rolls of money upon the cloth, casting at the same moment a childish look of displeasure at his wife. "You see," said the Plunger, with a deprecatory turning out of his hands. But there was so much grief on the girl's face that

he turned again to the gambler and touched his arm. He could not tell why he was so interested in these two. He had witnessed many such scenes before, and they had not affected him in any way except to make him move out of hearing. But the same dumb numbness in his head, which made so many things seem possible that should have been terrible even to think upon, made him stubborn and unreasonable over this. He felt intuitively —it could not be said that he thought—that the woman was right and the man wrong, and so he grasped him again by the arm, and said sharply this time:

"Come away! Do you hear? You are acting foolishly."

But even as he spoke the red won, and the Frenchman with a boyish gurgle of pleasure raked in his winnings with his two hands, and then turned with a happy, triumphant laugh to his wife. It is not easy to convince a man that he is making a fool of himself when he is winning some hundred francs every two minutes. His silent arguments to the contrary are difficult to answer. But the Plunger did not regard this in the least.

"Do you hear me?" he said in the same stubborn tone and with much the same manner with which he would have spoken to a groom. "Come away."

Again the Frenchman tossed off his hand, this time with an execration, and again he placed the rolls of gold coin on the red; and again the red won.

"My God!" cried the girl, running her fingers over the rolls on the table, "he has won half of the 20,000 francs. Oh, sir, stop him, stop him!" she cried. "Take him away."

"Do you hear me!" cried the Plunger, excited to a degree of utter self-forgetfulness, and carried beyond himself; "you've got to come with me."

"Take away your hand," whispered the young Frenchman, fiercely. "See, I shall win it all; in one grand *coup* I shall win it all. I shall win five years' pay in one moment."

He swept all of the money forward on the red and threw himself over the table to see the wheel.

"Wait, confound you!" whispered the Plunger, excitedly. "If you will risk it, risk it with some reason. You can't play all that money; they won't take it. Six thousand francs is the limit, unless," he ran on quickly, "you divide the 12,000 francs among the three of us. You understand, 6,000 francs is all that any one person can play; but if you give 4,000 to me, and 4,000 to your wife, and keep 4,000 yourself, we can each chance it. You can back the red if you like, your wife shall put her

money on the numbers coming up below eighteen, and I will back the odd. In that way you stand to win 24,000 francs if our combination wins, and you lose less than if you simply back the color. Do you understand?"

"No!" cried the Frenchman, reaching for the piles of money which the Plunger had divided rapidly into three parts, "on the red; all on the red!"

"Good heavens, man!" cried the Plunger, bitterly. "I may not know much, but you should allow me to understand this dirty business." He caught the Frenchman by the wrists, and the young man, more impressed with the strange look in the boy's face than by his physical force, stood still, while the ball rolled and rolled, and clicked merrily, and stopped, and balanced, and then settled into the "seven."

"Red, odd, and below," the croupier droned mechanically.

"Ah! you see; what did I tell you?" said the Plunger, with sudden calmness. "You have won more than your 20,000 francs; you are proprietors—I congratulate you!"

"Ah, my God!" cried the Frenchman, in a frenzy of delight, "I will double it."

He reached toward the fresh piles of coin as if he meant to sweep them back again, but the

Plunger put himself in his way and with a quick movement caught up the rolls of money and dropped them into the skirt of the woman, which she raised like an apron to receive her treasure.

"Now," said young Harringford, determinedly, "you come with me." The Frenchman tried to argue and resist, but the Plunger pushed him on with the silent stubbornness of a drunken man. He handed the woman into a carriage at the door, shoved her husband in beside her, and while the man drove to the address she gave him, he told the Frenchman, with an air of a chief of police, that he must leave Monte Carlo at once, that very night.

"Do you suppose I don't know?" he said. "Do you fancy I speak without knowledge? I've seen them come here rich and go away paupers. But you shall not; you shall keep what you have and spite them." He sent the woman up to her room to pack while he expostulated with and browbeat the excited bridegroom in the carriage. When she returned with the bag packed, and so heavy with the gold that the servants could hardly lift it up beside the driver, he ordered the coachman to go down the hill to the station.

"The train for Paris leaves at midnight," he said, "and you will be there by morning. Then

you must close your bargain with this old Carbut, and never return here again."

The Frenchman had turned during the ride from an angry, indignant prisoner to a joyful madman, and was now tearfully and effusively humble in his petitions for pardon and in his thanks. Their benefactor, as they were pleased to call him, hurried them into the waiting train and ran to purchase their tickets for them.

"Now," he said, as the guard locked the door of the compartment, "you are alone, and no one can get in, and you cannot get out. Go back to your home, to your new home, and never come to this wretched place again. Promise me—you understand?—never again!"

They promised with effusive reiteration. They embraced each other like children, and the man, pulling off his hat, called upon the good Lord to thank the gentleman.

"You will be in Paris, will you not?" said the woman, in an ecstasy of pleasure, "and you will come to see us in our own shop, will you not? Ah! we should be so greatly honored, sir, if you would visit us; if you would come to the home you have given us. You have helped us so greatly, sir," she said, "and may Heaven bless you!"

She caught up his gloved hand as it rested on the door and kissed it until he snatched it away

in great embarrassment and flushing like a girl. Her husband drew her toward him, and the young bride sat at his side with her face close to his and wept tears of pleasure and of excitement.

"Ah, look, sir!" said the young man, joyfully; "look how happy you have made us. You have made us happy for the rest of our lives."

The train moved out with a quick, heavy rush, and the car-wheels took up the young stranger's last words and seemed to say, "You have made us happy—made us happy for the rest of our lives."

"It had all come about so rapidly that the Plunger had had no time to consider or to weigh his motives, and all that seemed real to him now, as he stood alone on the platform of the dark, deserted station, were the words of the man echoing and re-echoing like the refrain of the song. And then there came to him suddenly, and with all the force of a gambler's superstition, the thought that the words were the same as those which his father had used in his letter, "you can make us happy for the rest of our lives."

"Ah," he said, with a quick gasp of doubt, "if I could! If I made those poor fools happy, mayn't I live to be something to him, and to

her? O God!" he cried, but so gently that one at his elbow could not have heard him, "if I could, if I could!"

He tossed up his hands, and drew them down again and clinched them in front of him, and raised his tired, hot eyes to the calm purple sky with its millions of moving stars. "Help me!" he whispered fiercely, "help me." And as he lowered his head the queer, numb feeling seemed to go, and a calm came over his nerves and left him in peace. He did not know what it might be, nor did he dare to question the change which had come to him, but turned and slowly mounted the hill, with the awe and fear still upon him of one who had passed beyond himself for one brief moment into another world. When he reached his room he found his servant bending with an anxious face over a letter which he tore up guiltily as his master entered. "You were writing to my father," said Cecil, gently, "were you not? Well, you need not finish your letter; we are going home.

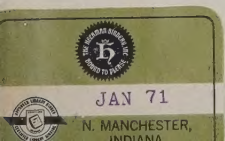
"I am going away from this place, Walters," he said as he pulled off his coat and threw himself heavily on the bed. "I will take the first train that leaves here, and I will sleep a little while you put up my things. The first train, you understand—within an hour, if it leaves that soon." His head sank back on the pillows

heavily, as though he had come in from a long, weary walk, and his eyes closed and his arms fell easily at his side. The servant stood frightened and yet happy, with the tears running down his cheeks, for he loved his master dearly.

"We are going home, Walters," the Plunger whispered drowsily. "We are going home; home to England and Harringford and the governor—and we are going to be happy for all the rest of our lives." He paused a moment, and Walters bent forward over the bed and held his breath to listen.

"For he came to me," murmured the boy, as though he was speaking in his sleep, "when I was yet a great way off—while I was yet a great way off, and ran to meet me——"

His voice sank until it died away into silence, and a few hours later, when Walters came to wake him, he found his master sleeping like a child and smiling in his sleep.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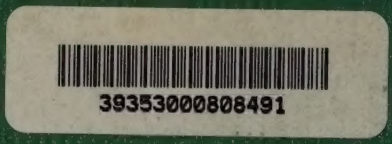
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